

# Labour Monthly

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EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

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R.P.D.

## May's Call to Unity

G. D. H. COLE

## Trade Unions and Rearmament

R. PAGE ARNOT

## The Soviet Trial

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MAY

1938

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# LABOUR MONTHLY

*A Magazine of International Labour*

VOLUME 20

MAY, 1938

NUMBER 5

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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# The Labour Monthly

*Editorial and Publishing Offices :*

7 JOHN STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

*Telephone :* HOLBORN 6656

The Editor of *The Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions.

## 1938 : Subscription Rates

[PAID IN ADVANCE]

British Isles :

One year - 7/- Six months - 3/6

Abroad :

One year 8/- or \$2.00

Six months 4/- or \$1.00

**American Subscription Representative** :— Philip Novick, 2800 Bronx Park East, New York City, U.S.A.

**South African Representative** :— The People's Bookshop, 30 Kirk Street, Johannesburg, South Africa.

*The Labour Monthly* is also obtainable wholesale from The Workers' Bookshop, 49 Farringdon Road, E.C.1.

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The articles in *The Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A., as well as in the annual index in each December Issue.

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

*May Day's Call to Unity—Opposing Forces—The Hour of Decision—Britain and the Fascist Alliance—Chamberlain's Secret—"If Chamberlain Wins, War Wins"—Rising Opposition—Lessons of the March Crisis—Why Labour Failed—Citrine and Chamberlain—The Crisis Goes Forward—Either-Or—Government and the Trade Unions—Engineers' Reply—Labour Manifesto on the People's Front—Co-operative Conference Reply—The United Peace Alliance—A Democratic Decision of the Labour Movement—"Independence" Sophisms—The Real Dependence on Chamberlain—Responsibilities of Leadership—The People's Front and Socialism—"Left" Arguments and Right Practice—The Path to Socialism—The Communist Crusade—Who are the Defeatists?—1929 and 1938—Unity Means Victory—The Hour of Choice*

**M**AY Day's traditional call to unity sounds to-day with an urgency which needs no words to explain it. On this May Day of 1938 the issue of unity dominates all others for the working class and for the whole democratic movement throughout the world, and above all in Britain. In the present urgent international situation, when Britain is signing the Pact with Italian Fascism which places its power directly on the side of Fascism and therefore of war, when Spanish Democracy is fighting its supreme battle still single-handed, when French Democracy is imperilled by the intervention of British reaction, when the hounds of Fascism are openly baying in full cry that the moment for the new division of the world has come, we are facing the final hour of decision in Britain. The choice which the Labour Movement has now to make will govern the future for Britain and the world.

ON the eve of May Day the Labour Party Executive has published a Manifesto against unity—equally against working class unity and against unity of the democratic and peace forces in Britain. The significance of this Manifesto lies in the situation which has prompted it. For this pronouncement is in fact no abstract pronouncement in the air, although from its form it might appear to have been composed in the clouds, remote from every burning issue we have to face. In reality it has been dictated by overwhelming facts of the all-sided drive towards unity which is revealing itself, also within the Labour Party Executive and leadership, facts which the diehards of reaction in the Labour Movement who still oppose unity can no longer ignore. On the eve of May Day the first All-in Conference has been summoned by the Leaders of the Labour Party, the Co-operative Party and the Liberal Party, together with prominent members of the Labour Party Executive, leading trade union officials, Communist signatories and democratic and peace representatives to unite in the common fight for support for Spain. By the time these lines appear the representative character of this Emergency Conference will have shown a first indication of the volume of National support for a common front. At the same time the Co-operative Conference, representing over five million Co-operators, has carried by 2,343,000 to 1,947,000 votes a resolution of support for the United Peace Alliance of Labour, Trade Union, Co-operative and Communist supporters, together with all democratic and peace forces, for the defeat of Chamberlain and the return of a People's Government for peace and social advance.

THESE events reveal in a vivid and dramatic form the sharp and growing contradiction which is at the heart of the present problems of the British Labour Movement and of the British political situation. It is evident that on this May Day of 1938 the issue of unity in Britain has reached a sharpness and immediacy never before equalled. This sharpness corresponds to the urgency of the situation. Which path will the Labour and democratic forces in Britain take? It is imperative that all, whatever their previous views,

should consider anew in the light of present facts the issues that are involved in the decision which will now have to be made.

**T**HE urgency of the situation is visible to all. On April 16 Chamberlain's representative signed the Pact with Mussolini, which in fact establishes the British-German-Italian Alliance ("The German Government have been kept fully informed of the negotiations throughout, so that there can be no question of anything but harmony and collaboration between the three Powers"—*Times*, 16.4.38). On the same day that the Pact was finally agreed, Franco reached the coast. That the two facts are closely and directly connected is no longer even attempted to be concealed. The British-German-Italian Alliance is established in the first place in order to smash Spanish Democracy, surround France with a ring of hostile reactionary Powers (Britain, Franco, Germany, Italy), break the Franco-Soviet Pact and draw in an enfeebled France under a puppet reactionary Government into the Four Power Pact. This is Chamberlain's Plan.

**H**OW has Chamberlain been able so far to go forward unchecked with this Plan? How has Chamberlain been able to place the power of democratic Britain as the decisive power on the side of Fascism, and to make the anti-fascist millions of the British people the allies of Hitler and Mussolini? How has Chamberlain, whose Ministry a few weeks ago was trembling in the balance before the universal outburst of revolt and indignation at his policy, now been able to go forward with that same policy with such strength and self-confidence that he can talk with contempt of the "feeble Opposition." The answer is glaring. *Chamberlain has succeeded because the forces of the Opposition, representing the majority of the population, are divided. From this cause arises the present extreme menace of the international situation.*

**L**AST month we wrote: "If Chamberlain wins, war wins." In the first round of the gathering fight in Britain, which expressed itself in the high stage of political tension and crisis during those weeks in March after the resignation

of Eden and the German seizure of Austria, when the fate of the Chamberlain Government was in the balance, Chamberlain has carried the day. That favourable moment for the offensive was lost, and we are now involved in a deeper and grimmer phase of the struggle. Chamberlain carried the day because the forces opposed to him were divided and because Labour failed to lead. That failure has at once brought heavy consequences. It has brought the British-Italian Pact. It has brought the extreme fascist offensive in Spain. It has brought the menacing drive forward of reaction in France, in close association with British reaction, to circumvent and frustrate the will of the people expressed in the People's Front. Mussolini boasts in his speech on March 30 that the moment has arrived for "the third great victorious campaign of the Empire" (*i.e.*, the third war after Abyssinia and Spain), for the "swift and implacable war" which will decide the fate of the world. Goebbels boasts in his speech at Nuremburg on April 7 that the moment has come to "divide the world anew" by "the power of German armaments." "Germany knows what she wants, and wants what she knows. There was a time when the world spoke of the demands it would make on us. To-day we speak only of the demands which we make on the world." The vultures are hovering over the expected feast. The language of open aggressive world war is no longer concealed. This is the consequence of Chamberlain's policy. This is the consequence of Labour's failure to lead and unite the forces for peace in the March crisis. "If Chamberlain wins, war wins."

**B**UT at the same time the high point of tension and inner crisis in British politics during these recent weeks, reaching an especially sharp point in the days of March, although not yet strong enough to overthrow Chamberlain, has revealed with powerful clearness all the forces of the situation in Britain, has demonstrated the growing strength of the opposition to Chamberlain, and has laid bare, once the lessons of this preliminary trial of strength are learned, and as the crisis develops further, the conditions and the possibility for victory over Chamberlain. Chamberlain has

for the moment carried the day ; but the campaign of recent weeks has seen the highest level of wide mass opposition and agitation against the "National" Government since its formation. And this necessarily goes forward to new heights; for the issues return in new forms and grow continuously greater, and therefore, despite all attempts at pacification and return to routine levels, compel the renewal and extension of the struggle and increased demand for unity. The lessons of the crisis and struggle as it has so far developed unmistakably point the way forward. The first necessity now is to face sharply and fearlessly these lessons, and the mistakes that have been made, in order to determine the necessary course of future advance.

**I**N the critical mid-week of March, when the first wave of mass opposition to Chamberlain's policy reached its highest point, the Chamberlain Government was undoubtedly weakened and in danger of falling. Sixty Conservative M.P.s had declared their readiness to vote against it; the influential City meeting at Winchester House had turned down Chamberlain's policy; the Liberal Party and Council of Action were ready to co-operate; Churchill and Lloyd George were scenting out their opportunity. The capitalist camp, that is to say, was more sharply divided than at any time since the formation of the "National" Government, and the Government majority was disintegrating. At this point the decisive initiative lay with Labour. On March 19 the Communist Party came out with the call for a People's Government led by Labour: "it is the immediate duty of the Labour Party to build a People's Government based on the power of organised Labour in alliance with all genuine democratic and peace forces." On March 20 *Reynolds' News* published its historic lead by the Editor, Sydney Elliott, for a United Peace Alliance led by Labour to defeat Chamberlain. On March 21 this was supported by the *News-Chronicle*. At the Labour Peace Campaign meeting on March 20, Herbert Morrison defined Labour's demands for the policy of a new Government: "in this crisis, and whatever political changes may follow, Labour must not hold

itself cheaply"; and at the Parliamentary Labour Party meeting he is stated (according to the report of Neil Maclean, M.P., to the Scottish Socialist Party Conference, reported in *Forward* of March 26) to have advocated reconsideration of the attitude of the Labour Party towards the Communist Party and other bodies in order to secure collective action against the Government. On March 22 the National Council of Labour met. A lead from Labour at this point, from the Labour Party and Trade Unions, declaring a definite refusal of confidence in Chamberlain and calling for unity of all forces to defeat him and enforce a positive policy for peace, would have exercised a decisive influence and made impossible the continuance of Chamberlain in power.

**T**HAT lead never came. In that fateful meeting of March 22 the National Council of Labour displayed a spectacle of division, paralysis and confusion. In the ranks of Labour four tendencies were revealed. The extreme right, dominating the central trade union machine, advocated "national unity" behind Chamberlain as essential against the menace of Fascism. The centre took refuge in doctrines of passive isolation in the name of "independence," and the refusal of leadership of the peace forces, which meant in fact to leave Chamberlain in power. A third tendency looked to the formation of a new type of "National" Government under the leadership of Churchill, Lloyd George and Eden, with Labour in a subordinate rôle. The fourth policy was the policy of the United Peace Alliance led by Labour, which could alone save peace. The National Council of Labour debated for hours and broke up without reaching a decision. In place of a declaration of policy, in place of the lead for which the whole country was looking, it issued an announcement that it would await Chamberlain's declaration of policy. The initiative was handed back to Chamberlain.

**B**Y that refusal Chamberlain was saved. On March 23 Chamberlain summoned Sir Walter Citrine and the General Council to Downing Street. They responded obediently to his call, and heard his appeal for the "good will and

help" of Labour, without issuing any repudiation of that appeal or condemnation of the Government. At once from that meeting the report went out to Britain and the world that Chamberlain had won, that Chamberlain had Labour on his side, that the opposition had collapsed. Chamberlain was able to make his speech on March 24 in the House of Commons without a division. Government Ministers passed out fulsome compliments to Labour on its support of national unity behind Chamberlain. The Conservative opposition, which could only be an auxiliary if Labour fought, but never an independent force, disappeared from view. Lloyd George remained abroad. Churchill hastened to make terms with Chamberlain and travelled to Paris as his decoy. Morrison departed to America on the grounds that the crisis was over and there was nothing more to be done. Chamberlain had been saved by the official Labour machine.

**B**UT the crisis was not over. From the very nature of the case it could not be; for with every advance of reaction and of war the issues grow larger. Having won this new lease of life, Chamberlain hastens forward more openly than ever with his policy of the alliance with Fascism, and draws up the Pact with Rome. The advance of the offensive in Spain awakens opinion in this country to horrified realisation of the betrayal that has taken place through the failure of the labour and democratic forces here to fight; and, despite all bans and excommunications, the Opposition leaders, including the Leaders of the Labour Party, the Co-operative Party and the Liberal Party, and the Chairman of the Trades Union Congress unite in organising the All-In Conference for Spain on April 23. At the same time the home offensive of Chamberlain is pushed forward with increased speed.

**T**HE experience of the March days had illuminated in a lightning flash the political landscape and the rising forces. It had made perfectly clear to the dominant forces of British capitalism that there can be only two alternatives for the immediate future of British politics. Either the rising opposition in the Labour and democratic camp will realise the United Peace Alliance under Labour's leadership which

can defeat Chamberlain. Or, if this visibly advancing movement is to be prevented, Chamberlain must rapidly tie up the Labour machine close to his support as in wartime, secure the co-operation of the trade unions, prepare emergency measures against the militants, reconstruct the "National" Government on a widened basis with the hope of also securing trade union or individual Labour collaboration, and proclaim anew the call to "national unity" as the counterpart of the alliance with Fascism. The Cliveden meeting on March 26, attended by Chamberlain, Inskip, and Cadogan of the Foreign Office, along with Lothian, the Astors, the Editor of the *Times* and the rest, drew up the new programme, not only in respect of foreign policy, but on the home front, for the future reconstruction of the "National" Government, the approach to the trade unions and the preparation of the stages towards conscription.

**T**HE approach to the trade unions by the Government, immediately following the March crisis was the inevitable next stage and sequel, and constitutes at present the nerve-centre of the inner political situation in Britain. For here at once the rising opposition of the working class, which had not been voiced by the General Council, began to make itself felt; and it became clear to the Government that Sir Walter Citrine, however much he might present himself as controlling the central trade union machine, had not such effective power to speak on behalf of and commit the working-class movement as they may have imagined. The Amalgamated Engineering Union Executive, meeting Sir Thomas Inskip on April 4, rejected the Citrine-Herald argument that the "industrial" issue of co-operation with Chamberlain over rearmament should be separated from the "political" issue. They directly raised the political question at the outset, queried the policy behind rearmament, demanded the right of Spain to arms, if arms were to be produced for the defence of democracy, denounced the supply of arms to potential enemies, and denounced the wholesale profiteering in armaments by the Government's rich backers.

**T**HIS initial stand by the Engineers, accompanied by a Manifesto of support for Spain, aroused a warm echo throughout the working-class movement. The South Wales Miners' Federation passed a resolution for action to secure arms for Spain, for working-class unity by Communist affiliation to the Labour Party, and for a national Emergency Labour Conference to force the Government to reverse its pro-fascist policy. The Opposition leadership of all parties united in organising the All-in Emergency Conference for Spain on April 23. The Scottish Joint Trades Council decided to organise an emergency conference in May, and to send a munitions and food ship to Spain. The Peace Alliance campaign of *Reynolds News* evoked a remarkable response, including from over 100 local labour parties within a fortnight. In the West Fulham bye-election the Government candidate was defeated by the joint fight of Labour, Liberal and Communist supporters. Joint committees began to be formed in a number of localities. It was clear that the struggle, so far from being ended by the collapse of the National Council of Labour in March, was only beginning to open out and deepen to its full range.

**T**HIS was the situation in which the Labour Party Executive Manifesto against unity was issued on April 13. The Labour Manifesto was the counter-offensive of reaction to stem the path against the rising tide of the demand for unity. While the Spanish fighters for democracy were being torn to pieces by the steel hail from limitless artillery and aeroplanes on the side of Fascism, without the arms to meet them; while Chamberlain was signing his bloodstained pact with Mussolini, the dwindling Bourbon majority on the Labour Party Executive was engaged in issuing its papal bulls of denunciation against those who should dare to unite in the common struggle. In the hour of crisis those to whom the generalship of Labour's forces had been entrusted issued their lead. That lead was to say No. Of sense of the urgent issues of the crisis there was no trace. Of plan to save Spain or defeat Chamberlain there was no conception. There was only one dogmatic implacable certainty. There must be no

united working-class front. There must be no Popular Front. There must be no democratic Peace Front. In other words, Chamberlain must rule.

**H**ARDLY had that Labour Manifesto been issued, claiming to speak on behalf of the two million members of the Labour Party in opposition to working class and democratic unity, than the Co-operative Party Conference met at Easter, assembling 500 delegates representing over five million members, and carried with acclamation the policy of the United Peace Alliance set out in *Reynolds News*. The Chairman of the Conference, Alfred Barnes, M.P., proclaimed :

How long are our political alignments in Britain to be allowed to reduce us to futility during this grave and fateful period in international affairs ?

Is British democracy to be hamstrung while the opposition parties and groups that advocate the League and collective security abroad continue to practise political isolation at home ?

Do we not in fact by these tactics assist the criminal policy of the "National" Government, while the democracies of the world are garotted one by one by an insatiable Fascism ?

"This statement of policy," reported the *Daily Herald* of April 16, "which is fundamentally different from the Labour Party's 'No Popular Front' Manifesto, was cheered by the majority of 504 delegates, representing 5¼ million co-operators, assembled at the Conference."

**T**he resolution adopted by the Co-operative Conference runs :

This annual conference of the Co-operative Party, representing Co-operators in Great Britain, having considered the proposals outlined in recent issues of *Reynolds' News* for a United Peace Alliance, declares that, in view of the grave international situation, the dangers of a world war, fascist dictatorship, aggression encouraged by the foreign policy of the present Government, it is essential to replace the Government at the earliest opportunity if peace is to be secured and the rights of democracy in Britain safeguarded.

The conference instructs the National Committee of the Party to approach the Labour Party to discuss ways and means of replacing the present Government at the earliest possible moment.

It will be recalled that "the proposals for a United Peace Alliance," as set out in *Reynolds News*, urged the combination of all the Opposition forces, Labour, Co-operative, Liberal, Communist, Independent and I.L.P., in a United Peace Alliance to defeat the Government and return a new Government for the carrying out of a common programme the principles of which were set out. This resolution was keenly and exhaustively debated. It was opposed by A. V. Alexander, M.P., who advocated the official Labour standpoint, and by six others of the nine Co-operative M.P.s. Nevertheless, this resolution was carried by 2,343,000 votes to 1,947,000.

**T**HIS vote of the Co-operative Conference transforms the situation of the Labour Movement. As recently as April 14, three days before this overwhelming vote of this most widely representative body of the organised Labour Movement in Britain, the *Daily Herald* was still claiming, on the basis of the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference vote last October, that six-sevenths of the membership of the Labour Party were opposed to the proposals for working-class unity or a Popular Front. This claim can now no longer be sustained. The Labour Party numbers some two million members. The Trades Union Congress numbers over four millions. The Co-operative Conference represents over five millions. The great part of the Labour Party membership and of the Trades Union Congress membership is included in the Co-operative Movement. Through this vote in the Co-operative Conference they have unmistakably shown their will. *The mass of the membership of the Labour Movement has democratically declared for the policy of working-class unity and the Popular Front.* It is now essential for an Emergency Labour Conference to be held, with full care and provision to ensure democratic expression of the will of the membership of all the affiliated organisations, in order that this decision can become a common decision of the whole Labour Movement. If there is any doubt of the will of the membership of the Labour Party a straight ballot of the entire membership could be organised on the issue of working-class unity and on the issue of the Popular Front or Peace Front to remove any such doubts.

**I**T is argued by the opponents of the Democratic Peace Front that such a policy would violate the "independence" of the working-class movement. "The Labour Party is to surrender an independence and status won by fifty years of hard struggle" (*Daily Herald* April 14, 1938). The argument is ironic in the mouths of the right wing advocates of class collaboration, who delight in the acceptance of titles and honours from the class enemy, that they should now endeavour to present themselves as the guardians of the "independence" of the working class, in order to prevent the most effective means of defeating the class enemy. The main gravamen of the charge against the official policy is precisely that it surrenders the independence of the working class. The refusal to unite and lead the forces against the "National" Government inevitably results in *dependence* on the "National" Government. The whole experience of the seven years since its formation has shown this.

**W**AS it "independence" to swing behind the "National" Government over its lying League professions on Abyssinia in 1935 and proclaim Sir Samuel Hoare the "Voice of Britain," thus handing over the general election of 1935 to the "National" Government? Was it "independence" to tail behind the "National" Government's criminal "non-intervention" policy for fourteen months and help to strangle Spanish Democracy? Was it "independence" to marshal the Labour Party Conference and the Trades Union Congress in support of the "National" Government's rearmament programme irrespective of the policy behind the armaments? Was it "independence" when Citrine and the General Council obediently responded to Chamberlain's call for co-operation at Downing Street on March 23 and thereby helped to save his Government? The reality behind this mock slogan of "independence" is—*dependence on Chamberlain*. Its exponents are so anxious to be *independent* of the possible *allies* with whose aid they could defeat Chamberlain that they end up by being dependent on the real enemy, the representative of the main forces of finance-capital, Chamberlain.

THE old "Liberal-Labour" coalition policy of MacDonald before the war, which was rightly condemned by every conscious worker, was a policy of dependence of Labour on the main governing party of capitalism, which was then the Liberal Party. But to-day the main forces of capitalism are no longer represented by the Liberal remnant, or by the miscellaneous democratic and peace forces who at present waver between two camps and could be won to associate themselves with the *leadership* of a united Labour Movement. The main forces of capitalism are to-day represented by the "National" Government, which is the concentration of the capitalist front. The secret of working-class strategy and tactics at every stage is at each stage to direct the blow against the main enemy, and to utilise every ally for this. The independence of the Labour Movement does not consist in passive isolation. *The real independence of the Labour Movement consists precisely in leading and uniting all forces for the defeat of the main enemy and representative of finance-capital, which is to-day the "National" Government.*

AGAIN, it is argued by the opponents of the Democratic Peace Front that its adoption would mean the surrender or postponement of the aims of Socialism. "Mr. Alfred Barnes, who yesterday blessed the Popular Front . . . implies that Socialism is irrelevant in the present situation. . . . What must be the practical (and the emotional) effect of such talk upon the millions of loyal Party workers whose whole heart is set upon seeing a great instalment of the living Socialist Commonwealth in their time?" (*Daily Herald*, April 16). The *Times* editorial after the Co-operative Conference decision is also much concerned with the feelings of the "staunch Socialist" who would be dismayed at the adoption of a Popular Front. No less emphatically the I.L.P. hastens to give support to the right wing of the Labour Party Executive in opposing the Popular Front; as on so many issues, as on the Soviet Union, on collective security, etc., the "left" arguments of the Trotskyist type have a way of coinciding exactly with the aims of imperialist reaction. This curious alignment should already give warning to serious Socialists

to see the realities behind this argument, and to consider whether opposition to the Popular Front is really the best way to help Socialism and not rather the best way to help Chamberlain. It is impossible to fail to observe that the extreme right wing elements in the leadership of the Labour Party and the trade unions, who were always most ready to follow MacDonaldism, Mondism and every other form of betrayal of Socialism and of class collaboration, are now very eager to proclaim the principles of "pure Socialism" and "nothing but Socialism," when it can be put forward as an excuse for running away from the present fight, the fight against the offensive of reaction.

**T**HIS argument can only be put forward by those who separate "Socialism" as an abstract Utopian ideal from the realities of the class struggle. It has nothing in common with Marxism. To a few very naïve souls it may seem a "left" argument, although its use by the most extreme reactionary right wing leadership should help to undeceive these. But what does it mean in practice? It means to hand over political initiative and domination to the offensive of reaction and fascism, and therefore to destroy the conditions for the advance of the working-class movement to power and to the realisation of Socialism. It means that no sincere democratic fighter, no opponent of fascism, no supporter of a collective peace policy is to be allowed to unite in the common fight, unless he will also beforehand swallow the principles of "socialism" as laid down by the Labour Party. This means in fact to thrust away millions of willing allies and hand them over to the "National" front. Once again, the reality of the policy is to help Chamberlain.

**T**HE programme of the United Peace Alliance, as adopted by the Co-operative Conference, includes, not only [the basic aim of the defence of peace and democracy against fascism, but equally immediate social and economic aims for the protection of the civil population against air attack, the abolition of slums, the development of public works, the fight against malnutrition and measures against profiteering.

These measures are not a programme of Socialism. But the fight of the united mass movement for such a type of programme is already the preliminary mobilisation of the fight, in the present social and political conditions, against the dominant capitalist forces, and the essential preliminary stage in order to advance to the fight for Socialism. Unless the united fight for the immediate urgent issues is organised to-day, the alternative will be, not the advance to Socialism, but the victory of reaction and war and the crushing offensive against the working-class movement and democracy.

**T**HE *Daily Herald* taunts the Communist Party that in the programme of the Communist Crusade for the People the aim of Socialism is not included in the immediate objects of the common fight. But it is precisely because Communists are serious about the fight for Socialism that they do not play with it as an empty word behind which to hide passivity and shirking from the real immediate issues of the present stage of the fight. In order to reach the aim of Socialism, a great deal has to be done first. We have no hesitation in declaring that the immediate issue of the fight at this moment is not Socialism. The immediate issue is to defeat the "National" Government, to win the fight of Spanish Democracy, to defeat Fascism and its war offensive, to win the fight for democracy and the rights of the working-class movement, so as to create the conditions for the advance to the fight for Socialism. The Spanish people are fighting and dying, not for Socialism as the immediate common programme of the civil war against Fascism, but for the Democratic Republic of the new type. If the working-class parties had separated themselves off to insist on Socialism as the programme of the fight against Fascism, they would have smashed any common front, and Franco would have long ago conquered in Spain. The serious fighter for Socialism is he who faces the realities of the present fight and refuses to take refuge in empty words to cover practical support of reaction.

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**F**INALLY, "Defeatism" is charged by the right wing opponents of unity against those who advocate a united working-class front and democratic front as essential in order to bring down Chamberlain. "The third assumption is a piece of miserable defeatism: it is that Labour in independence cannot win a parliamentary majority" (*Daily Herald*, April 14). They declare that the Labour Party can win on its own without allies on the left or on the right. A little reflection should make clear that the real Defeatism is exactly this policy. For this policy means in reality to be completely unconcerned about the urgency of defeating Chamberlain in the present crisis, and to be content to continue as a permanent Opposition, peacefully awaiting a hypothetical future majority in an infinitely extensible future of peaceful parliamentary development. Such a picture has nothing to do with the real world. The will to win is not shown by a complacent empty-headed Panglossian "optimism," while every actual position is steadily being lost to the enemy without a battle, but by the active readiness and concern to utilise every resource and possibility to make victory certain. It is just because we are seriously concerned to defeat Chamberlain that we demand that the Labour Party should organise the unity of the working-class and win all allies in the common fight in order to ensure speedy victory in the present crisis.

**T**HE Labour Party Executive Manifesto endeavours to justify its complacency by recalling that in 1929 a turn-over of 19 seats would have given a Labour majority. The ability to make such a comparison is a startling index of the blissful unawareness of the chasm that lies between 1929 and to-day. But even if we confine ourselves to the restricted parliamentary measuring rod, the comparison leaves out of account that the overwhelming majority of contests in 1929 were three-cornered contests, and no less than 118 of the 287 Labour seats were won on a minority vote, owing to the still continuing dominant division of Conservatives and Liberals. These conditions no longer obtain. Since then the concentration of the Conservative and great part of the Liberal forces in the united "National" front has trans-

formed the situation, as shown in the 1931 and 1935 elections, with which comparison would be more useful. Against this combination of the capitalist forces a corresponding combination of the working-class forces together with the remaining opposition forces is essential.

**B**UT the realisation of unity would mean more in its practical effects than can be measured by any of the customary arithmetical calculations of existing parliamentary representation. The realisation of working-class unity, and of unity of the working class and democratic front, would not only combine the present forces, but would as an immediate consequence bring millions of the at present unorganised workers into the Trade Unions and the Labour Party, as the example of France has shown. It would transform the political situation and rally millions of the at present apathetic electors, the army of non-voters, into political consciousness and activity in the stream of the popular front. It would give new hope and confidence, and open the untapped reservoirs of enthusiasm. That is why the policy of Unity is the policy of Victory. The refusal of Unity is the real Defeatism.

**T**HE hour of choice is now before the Labour Movement and the democratic forces in Britain. It is not yet too late, though the situation is already grave and urgent in the extreme. The decision of the Co-operative Conference has shown the way forward. We can still realise working-class unity and the Democratic Peace Front. We can still defeat Chamberlain and the ranging of Britain with the Fascist Alliance. On the decisions that now require to be taken depends the immediate future for Britain and the world.

R. P. D.

# Trade Unions and Rearmament

BY G. D. H. COLE

IT IS INEVITABLE that comparisons should be made between the demands which are now being made upon the Trade Unions by the Chamberlain Government and those which were made in 1914 and 1915 by Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George. Once more the Trade Unions are being asked to pledge their support to a campaign of intensive armament; and once more the engineering Trade Unions in particular are being asked to agree to some form of "dilution of labour"—though it is still by no means clear how far the Government's proposals go, or exactly what form they are intended to take. Already the Trades Union Congress General Council has met the Government, with precisely what outcome nobody yet knows, although to some extent the General Council's answer can doubtless be read between the lines of the manifesto issued by the General Council of Labour almost immediately after the meeting. Already, in addition, the Government has met the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trade Unions and the Amalgamated Engineering Union—which last seems up to the present to have been the only body that has asked any inconvenient questions. The Government has also met the Confederation of Employers' Organisations and the Engineering Employers' Federation; and at both these meetings everything seems to have gone swimmingly. How, indeed, should everything not go swimmingly between the Government and the employers, when apparently all the employers are being asked to do is to accept the sacrifices to be made by the Trade Unions and use them as a means of extracting additional profits? For there seems to be no suggestion that the employers in the armament industries should forego the profits of re-armament, or indeed that their profits should be limited even to the extent to which they were limited between 1915 and 1918. At an earlier stage in the present re-armament campaign Mr. Baldwin did talk about ensuring that no unreasonable profits were made out of re-armament; but that promise seems to have been quite forgotten by his successor, and it is even being suggested that the National Defence Contribution constitutes a sufficient substitute for the limitation of profits.

Naturally, then, the Government and the employers appear to be on excellent terms. As for the Trade Unions, the hook is well baited with the usual worm of patriotism. The Trade Unions and the Labour Party are being told that they must agree to whatever the Government

deems necessary because it is illogical for them to pose as the opponents of Fascism and the friends of collective security and at the same time to refuse whatever may be requisite in order to ensure that Great Britain shall be in a position to play her part. When Trade Unionists pertinently enquire, in response to these demands, what precise part Mr. Chamberlain and his supporters intend Great Britain to play, the only answer they get is that it is a great mistake to mix up political and industrial issues, and that the Trade Unions ought to be prepared to deal with such questions as the dilution of labour and the speeding up of armament production as "purely industrial matters," without bringing in irrelevant political considerations. Political questions, it is said, ought to be dealt with not by the Trade Unions in their industrial negotiations with the Government, but by the Labour Party, their political representative, on the floor of the House of Commons; for the Government is well aware that, if it can deal separately with the Labour Party politically and the Trade Unions industrially, Labour criticism in the House of Commons will cut no ice, and in the industrial field the Trade Unions will be unable to advance the very arguments which are most pertinent to the situation as a whole.

Fortunately, the spokesmen of the Amalgamated Engineering Union have already refused to swallow the bait flung before them by Sir Thomas Inskip. At their interview with him on April 4, they insisted on asking him, before they would consent to discuss the industrial aspects of the question, what purpose the armaments which he was demanding were intended to serve. They got no answer—not even the evasive kind of answer which has been given to the same question on so many previous occasions. Doubtless Sir Thomas Inskip could easily have made up an answer that would have made a decent showing in the newspapers, even if it had not been in the least convincing to the members of the A.E.U. But he appears to have made no answer at all: presumably he regarded the asking of the question as a piece of impertinence meriting a thorough snub.

Nevertheless, the question is highly relevant; for there is no sign at all that the Government is arming for the support of a policy of pooled security or for resistance to Fascist aggression, and there are all too many signs that it is arming for the very different purpose of striking with the Fascist dictators a bargain which will safeguard the interests of imperialism and capitalist property throughout the world. I feel no doubt that Mr. Chamberlain and the great financial interests on which his Government finally rests regard the present world situation as essentially a struggle between Socialism and Communism on the one hand and capitalism and imperialism on the other, and that accordingly they feel themselves to be essentially on the same side as Hitler and Mussolini—that is, against the working class. There are, of course, tiffs within the capitalist happy family—just as there are unfortunately all too many tiffs inside the working-class family which desperately

needs unity if it is to prevail. But these capitalist tiffs do not prevent Mr. Chamberlain from regarding Hitler's threat to the British Empire as a secondary matter in comparison with the Socialist threat to capitalist property and to the imperialist system as a whole.

For this reason it seems to me suicidal for the British Labour Movement to give any support to the present Government in its rearmament policy. I can imagine, in the present desperate condition of the world's affairs, that it might be the duty of the Labour movement to support a non-Socialist Government, or even to take part in a mixed Government of the "Left," and in doing this to make many sacrifices in order to speed up the supply of armaments. But the only condition on which this policy could be correct would be that the Government should have given in advance clear and unequivocal undertakings as to policy—undertakings which would put it beyond question that Fascist aggression was to be resisted and that the claims of democracy were to be put in front of the claims of property wherever the issue arose. This would mean, in the present situation, at least the following things: abandonment of non-intervention in Spain, re-affirmation of the willingness to enter into a collective pact of pooled security, and the immediate institution of political and military conversations with France and the Soviet Union with the object of laying firm foundations for such a pact. To any Government which is not prepared to follow this line—and it is of course out of the question that it should be followed by Mr. Chamberlain or his backers—the Labour movement owes nothing by way of collaboration. I wish it would say so plainly, and face boldly the tornado of criticism from the capitalist press and the reactionary speech-mongers which such a declaration would inevitably arouse.

So much for the political aspects of the question. I want to devote the rest of this article to a consideration of the more purely Trade Union side of the matter. In 1915, when the Trade Unions entered into the Treasury Agreement with Mr. Lloyd George, they exacted from him two promises—or rather, one promise was exacted at the first Treasury Conference by representatives of the movement as a whole, and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (now the A.E.U.) which then occupied a key position as it does to-day, refused to give its adhesion to the agreement until the second promise had also been made. These two promises were, first, that any Trade Union rules or conditions abrogated during the war should be restored when hostilities were over; and, secondly, that there should be a special statutory limitation of profits in the armament industries. What happened in respect of these two promises?

First, as to dilution. It began in a small way, with the admission of women and less skilled male workers to work on shells and fuses. But, within a few months, the Government had supplemented the voluntary undertaking embodied in the Treasury Agreement with the

compulsory powers of the Munitions of War Act of July, 1915; and thereafter the dilution of labour went on apace with the aid of special bodies of Dilution Commissioners, who were sent round the country to institute the new system—and sometimes met with a warm reception, for example on the Clyde, despite the compulsory arbitration provisions which had been incorporated in the Munitions of War Act. By the spring of 1916 military conscription had been introduced and thereafter the Government was armed with far more effective weapons against the Trade Unions; for the military authorities called up more and more men, and every fresh “comb-out” necessarily involved the pushing of dilution to a further stage. Moreover, men who made themselves inconvenient in the workshops were apt to find their certificates of exemption from military service withdrawn; and as the war of attrition continued more and more men were working in the shops either as Army Reserve Munition Workers, who had been first called up for military service and then released for industrial work but were liable to be recalled to the colours at any time, or as War Munition Volunteers who had entered into engagements which enabled the Ministry of Munitions to move them about as it pleased. Workshop discipline came to be more and more dominated by the threat of being “combed-out”; and though there were sporadic revolts headed by the shop-stewards, the Trade Unions, having signed away their freedom under the Treasury Agreement, and acquiesced in the subsequent measures of compulsion, were unable officially to give any effective backing.

And what happened when the war was over and the time came for the pledges that had been given to be redeemed by the restoration of Trade Union rules and conditions? It was very soon found that these pledges offered in fact a great many loopholes for evasion; for it was in practice impossible in many instances to put back the workshops into the condition in which they had been before dilution was introduced. The machinery and the methods of manufacture had been changed; and in many cases it was out of the question to revert to the older methods of production. Nevertheless, in a considerable number of instances, the old conditions were put back under Trade Union pressure—that is, in workshops where methods of production remained largely the same or the requirements of post-war industry involved restoring the old methods. But even in these instances restoration did not last. By the latter part of 1920 the engineering industry was plunging headlong into the post-war slump. Workers were being sacked right and left; the shop-stewards’ movement was falling to pieces; and naturally the more aggressive workmen were apt to receive the honour of selective dismissal. The employers’ view was that, while they were under an obligation to restore the old conditions, they were under no obligation to maintain them subsequently. Once the act of restoration had been made the matter became one in which the Govern-

ment had no longer any concern, and the only relevant question was the relative strength of the employers' and workers' organisations. Accordingly, except in the most strongly organised establishments, a holocaust of trade union customs was soon being made; and the lock-out of 1922, by further weakening the A.E.U., enabled the employers to carry the process still further. They had learnt an immense amount during the war about the economies possible by means of mass-production based on automatic machinery and the employment of cheap labour; and one branch after another of the engineering industry was revolutionised in the post-war years by the application of the new technique. In certain sections of the industry, notably in the heavier branches, the need for highly-skilled labour remained so great that the Trade Unions were able to a large extent to maintain their position. But in the lighter engineering trades, which were also the most rapidly expanding sections, the proportion of skilled to less-skilled workers fell continually. There was a sharp reduction in the number of apprentices entering the engineering trades, and a growing tendency to use even those who remained as cheap labour on repetition jobs instead of enabling them to acquire an all-round expertness as craftsmen. These factors, indeed, largely account for such shortage of highly-skilled workers as exists at the present time and lends some colour to the demand for dilution. If the proportion of skilled men had been adequately maintained during the post-war period, there would be no difficulty now in finding an ample supply of craftsmen for all the munitions that the Government is seeking to produce, and at the same time for maintaining other branches of the industry, including exports, at a level fully corresponding to the demand.

As for the second pledge, concerning the limitation of profits, what happened was no more satisfactory from the trade union point of view. The Government did, indeed, include in the Munitions of War Act special clauses limiting the profits which could be retained by the munition makers; but this was done by fixing, in the first place, a "standard profit" which the employer was allowed wholly to retain, and thereafter allowing him to retain in addition a proportion of any excess profits above the standard. This may sound not too bad. But in fact the standard was fixed so high as to give the employers, even apart from the excess, considerably more than they had been making before the war; and in addition they were allowed to force up prices to such a level that even the twenty per cent. of excess profits which the Act allowed them to keep amounted to an assured fortune for almost every munition-making firm. Shares in engineering and kindred companies changed hands at fantastic values based on the abnormally high war-profits. In effect, though profits were limited on paper, the limited profits were wildly in excess of anything that the employers themselves could possibly have hoped for when the agreement was made.

What are the morals of the Trade Unions' experience between 1914 and the slump of 1921? First, as far as dilution is concerned, it must, I think, be taken as certain that no promise to return to the previous conditions will be of much value. Wherever employers are allowed to introduce dilution of labour and to break down established Trade Union conditions, the result is that they learn a lot of new ways of cheapening production; and, as long as the capitalist system continues to exist, they will argue that the conditions of capitalist competition make it impossible for them to return to the less economical methods of production which have been given up. If the Trade Unions attempt to insist on such a return—or, what comes to the same thing, on maintaining the restored conditions in existence for any length of time—they will only be able to do this in establishments in which they are exceptionally strong; and the owners of these establishments will at once complain both of foreign competition and of the competition of other establishments in which Trade Unionism has not been strong enough to maintain satisfactory conditions. If not at once, at any rate as soon as industry passes into one of its periods of slump, the employers will again abrogate the restored conditions and put into practice the new methods which they have learnt. This would doubtless be much more difficult if the workers were a hundred per cent. organised; but in practice the growing use of female and less skilled labour undermines trade union strength and makes it easy for the employers to establish new factories outside the radius of effective trade union power. Short of a degree of organised strength from which the trade union movement is still rather remote, there can be no effective guarantees that dilution will be only temporary—unless, indeed, the workers are politically strong and determined enough to install and maintain in power a Government which will effectively bend the employers to its will, to the extent, if necessary, of taking the entire industry out of their hands.

As for the limitation of profits, it is of no value unless it is accompanied by thoroughgoing guarantees against the raising of prices, and indeed of the lowering of prices wherever costs of production are reduced by dilution or by the spreading of overheads over a larger mass of output. The only real way of limiting profits would be for the Government to take over altogether—as the French Government has done in a number of cases—the factories producing munitions of war, paying the employers a fixed rent for their factories during the period of “occupation,” but giving them no interest or share in the results of current output. This would be, in effect, temporary socialisation of the armament industry; and it might well turn into permanent socialisation if only the working-class movement would unite its forces behind a common programme.

In sum, then, I do not believe that it is possible to secure from a Government such as Mr. Chamberlain's industrial guarantees which

will prevent dilution or other measures for speeding-up the output of armaments from reacting disastrously upon trade union strength. Even apart from the political considerations which I have discussed earlier in this article the industrial case against dilution is immensely strong. But I very much hope the Trade Unions will consider these two aspects of the Government's demands upon them not separately but together, and that they will not be prepared to make any industrial sacrifices except in return for fully adequate political guarantees, involving primarily and of course a new Government pledged to follow a policy consistent with working-class interests and beliefs.

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## Next Month !

Sydney R. Elliott, Editor of *Reynolds News*, will contribute an article on  
"The United Peace Alliance"

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# The Charge of France's Two Hundred

BY NEIL HUNTER

A VICTORIOUS SERIES of strikes carried through by French Labour in May and June, 1936, provided the greatest shock international capitalism has ever experienced. Since that date the Anglo-French financial oligarchy has had the sensation of sitting on a powder-magazine, and in consequence, despite other grave preoccupations, its main problem has been to discover a means to redress the balance of forces which then began to tilt against it and in favour of the labouring masses.

The reason for this attitude of panic in face of the triumph of the French Popular Front will be clearer after a brief consideration of the relations which have prevailed in more recent times between the financial oligarchies of Britain and France.

By the dawn of the twentieth century the age-old conflict between the rival imperialisms of Britain and France had toned down and was already giving place to a system of ever-closer co-operation against the threat to both from the rise of a new imperialist power beyond the Rhine. For nearly forty years this co-operation, crystallised in the *Entente Cordiale* of Edwardian days, has been the bulwark of the City of London's financial supremacy, of the imperialist strength of both Britain and France.

Partly a financial partnership, the Entente was still more a strategic alliance, assuring for the two imperialisms the joint protection of Britain's navy, with command of the ocean routes, and of the French army which covered the landward approaches to the Channel—so vital to Britain—at the same time as it protected Paris itself. Herein lies the significance of Baldwin's famous utterance: "Our frontier is on the Rhine."

The partnership had had to withstand rude shocks. Only after four long years of grim struggle, entailing the slaughter of millions of young men, countless sacrifice and colossal dissipation of the painfully accumulated wealth of centuries, was a decision reached favourable to British and French imperialism and involving the temporary annihilation of Germany as an imperialist power.

Since the close of the War, British and French supremacy has been challenged from other quarters also, notably by the growth in the productive power of the U.S.A. and the consequent invasion of the world markets by that country.

But in all these cases the shock has come from without. Of a different order was the mutiny in the Home Fleet in 1931. The refusal of the sailors to accept a slashing cut in their rates of pay was a warning to the financial oligarchy that trouble might also come from within. As is well-known the warning was quickly heeded, the cuts were immediately restored, and every effort was made to guard against a repetition of such a movement in the armed forces of Britain.

Significant as were the events at Invergordon, the question at issue was then, after all, a comparatively limited one, involving the standard of living of, say, half a million persons, taking into account their wives and families as well as the sailors themselves. It could be, and was, adjusted with little financial inconvenience to the bourgeoisie.

So it was that the vast movement in France in the early summer of 1936 was, for the oligarchies of Britain and France, an entirely new development, a challenge to their power on a hitherto unprecedented scale. It is common knowledge that on this occasion the bourgeoisie had no ready answer and was compelled to grant almost in their entirety the demands put forward by the French workers. This was due to the circumstance that at that time the bourgeoisie had absolutely no mass basis left in France. The development of the People's Front in action had not only healed the split in the French working-class movement, had not only achieved organic fusion in the trade-union sphere and the united front of the socialist and communist workers; it had also succeeded in destroying the influence over the petty-bourgeois masses, the peasantry and certain strata in the colonies which the fascist leagues, instruments of monopoly capitalism, had been striving to establish. Indeed the Popular Front movement partook of the character of *a movement of the whole people directed against the stranglehold of the finance oligarchy*. That this was its significance may be borne out by the study of the *Front Populaire* programme, while the fact that the Blum Government, under pressure from the masses, proceeded right away to attack one of the strongest positions of "The Two Hundred Families" by introducing the law to reform the constitution of the Bank of France, bore eloquent witness to the vigour of popular reaction.

The finance oligarchy awoke to the realisation that the whole French people were united not only to defend their material interests against the capitalist offensive, but, equally, to prevent another world-wide slaughter. In doing so they were cutting right across the solution chosen by the bourgeoisie for the settlement of the problem of Hitler Germany. Despite all the airy talk about "bringing Germany back to Geneva," ruling circles in London and Paris were well aware from the start that they had no peaceful solution to offer.\* On the contrary their sole hope for the future lay in compelling Hitler to look eastward, in

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\* "I do not think we have seen the last great war," Baldwin told the House of Commons on Armistice Day, 1933.

facilitating his over-running of the Danubian countries with the ultimate aim of attacking and dismembering the Soviet Union.

True Hitler needed no persuasion. Nevertheless there was a danger. Does not the Fuehrer in *Mein Kampf* speak of the necessity of first annihilating France "the hereditary enemy"? It was in view of that danger that Barthou proposed the conclusion of a Franco-Soviet Pact. The fierce resistance put up in both France and Britain to the Barthou policy is not forgotten, and if in the end it prevailed, it was only because the reaction saw in it the prospect of carrying out a pretty piece of double-crossing! While the might of the Soviet Union is used as a reassurance for the Rhine frontier, all the time the energies of the financial oligarchy are directed to giving the Pact a one-way significance; a pact valuable to imperialist Britain and France, but as valueless as they can make it for staying aggression elsewhere and protecting the Soviet Union and world peace: in a word for fulfilling the conditions upon which, alone, the Soviet government, with the support of all genuinely democratic forces, was prepared to come in.

But barring the way to the conclusion of a Four-Power Pact of aggression against the Soviet Union, stood the *bloc* of the French workers, middle-classes and peasantry, who had voted in overwhelming numbers for the parties of the *Front Populaire*. At all costs the new front must be broken. All and every means were employed to this end. Nor was any time lost. Unable to strike an immediate blow on the home front, the forces of reaction turned to the field of foreign affairs. Despite the very real danger to British imperial communications in the Mediterranean, the sanctions against Italy were raised in haste, with the prime intention of discrediting the Blum government, means being found to compel it to follow the British initiative in this matter.

But the main attack of the reaction in the field of foreign relations came a few weeks later. The origins of the rebellion of the generals against the Spanish republic are still partially wrapped in obscurity. The extent of the complicities involved has yet to be established. It is known, however, that there were present at certain conspiratorial meetings in Morocco, which took place immediately prior to the outbreak of the rebellion, persons who were in a position to keep the British government fully informed of what was brewing, and were in close touch with the French reaction.

A study of the attitude of the reactionary press of both Britain and France at that time is sufficient to dispose of the theory that it was only, or even mainly, the groups with direct interests in Spain, such as those controlling the Rio Tinto and the Orcosera mines and the public utilities of Catalonia, which were backing Franco. In fact almost the entire financial oligarchy was desirous of a victory for him, as being the surest way to create internal difficulties in France, and render it possible, through the spread of a spirit of defeatism, to detach the Radicals, the party of the middle classes, from their

alliance with the workers.

It is no doubt true that in 1936 the reaction had not yet begun to grasp where their policy of backing a rebel general in league with the Fascist Powers was going to lead them. The belief was still in a rapid victory for Franco, and Anglo-French capitalism felt very confident of its ability to have him in its pocket.

The heroic resistance of the militiamen who defended Madrid against a trained army to the astonishment of the whole world shattered this comfortable dream.

By the late summer of 1936, however, the Two Hundred Families were getting their wind again. There then began the counter-offensive within France itself which has continued unintermittently ever since.

The first indication of it was a sharp attack on the stability of the currency. In September came the first devaluation of the franc (which had remained on a firm gold basis since 1926). The evident intention of this move was to create discontent by raising the cost of living and, concurrently, to nullify the effect of the increases in wages. At the same time a policy was pursued of resistance to the new agreements in the field of industry, while continuously sabotaging the economic recovery in France which was then beginning to emerge from the depths of the depression.

In the conduct of this counter-offensive there can be little doubt that the French and British bourgeoisie were (and are) working hand in glove. And it is easy for them to do so, for in both countries the concentration of financial and industrial power in a few hands is almost equally advanced. While in Britain the effective control of the national economy centres in a few City houses, French economy is likewise subjected to the control of a small oligarchy—"The Two Hundred Families"—proprietors of that inner group of private banks long known as *La Haute Banque*, a group which includes the houses of Rothschild, of Mallet Freres, of Mirabaud et Cie, of Lazard Bros. (Paris, London and New York), of Neufilze, Hotlinguer, and a few others.

Working through the medium of the credit institutions and of such key industrial banks as the *Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas* and the *Union Parisienne*, the Two Hundred Families are in a position of control over almost every undertaking of any size throughout all sectors of France's economy. Their monopolistic practices affect even the smallest retail businesses, which have little bargaining power when it comes to dealing with giant trusts. Until 1936 the policy of the Bank of France and thereby the direct control of credit was also completely in their hands.

The result of this tremendous concentration of the country's capital in a few hands is seen in the statistics relating to estates passing at death of the owner. From these figures it appears that 46.4 per cent. of people dying in France have no property at all to leave behind them.

Another 28.4 per cent. have less than 10,000 francs (roughly £60). M. Augustin Hamon, the third volume of whose masterly analysis of French capitalism has just appeared,\* sums up the position in the following passage :—

Wealth in France is mainly concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority of owners of land, real estate, and movable property, representing approximately one out of every 2,119 persons. At the other extreme about 1,553 out of every 2,119 persons have only their labour-power to live by. Between these two groups is the middle-class, the lower middle-class of town and country and the more well-to-do, accounting for the remaining 565. The middle class and, in a lesser degree, the group of propertyless people constitute the reservoir whence comes the savings absorbed by capital issues of stocks and shares. Out of these savings the tiny minority of big capitalists allows itself handsome pickings.

Although in the nineteenth century there were sharp lines of cleavage within the ranks of capitalist society in France, notably between those descending from the noblesse of pre-Revolution times, and the others, such is hardly the case to-day. It is still possible to draw a rough distinction between the various families on the basis of their nominal profession of faith. It has been reckoned that within the higher ranks of the bourgeoisie the proportion is about 70 per cent. Catholic, 20 per cent. Protestant, and 10 per cent. Jewish, but such distinctions have little meaning nowadays, representatives of all these groups are found sitting together on the same boards, and there has been considerable inter-marriage.

It is equally certain that just as formerly hostile groups within the French bourgeoisie have come to a working arrangement, so has the French bourgeoisie and the British come to work in unusually close co-operation, made possible by the fact that each is a close oligarchy. Certain of the private banks are international, as for instance Rothschilds and Lazard, with branches in both Paris and London. But, quite apart from such, continuous contact is maintained in the operations of business. Loans and credits are given from time to time to the respective governments of the two countries, Paris invests freely in London shares, as for instance, in South African gold-mines, while much British capital is invested in France. An interesting sidelight on the influence which British capitalism is able to exercise upon French affairs is gained from a study of the list of directors of the Suez Canal Company. This Company has its head office in Paris and is nominally French. In reality the control is entirely in British hands and as Augustin Hamon, writing of these princely appointments, worth 350,000 francs apiece, remarks, "most certainly no-one can be elected to the Board of the Suez Canal if England withholds consent," and draws the seemingly not unwarranted conclusion that "the post of a director of the Suez Canal is given in return for services rendered or to come." It is interesting to note on the list such names as the late

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\**Les Maîtres de la France*—Editions Sociales Internationales, Paris.

Gaston Doumergue, most reactionary of recent prime ministers, of M. de Flueriau, a former ambassador in London, of General Weygand, one-time Chief of the General Staff, and the Comte de Nateche, editor of the influential *Journal des Débats*.

Making full use of their positions, the magnates of the City of London have continuously backed up the Two Hundred Families in their campaign against the Popular Front. First there was the imposition on the French government of the plan of Non-intervention in Spain. Then came the devaluation of the franc. By the Spring of 1937 certain of the Radicals were wavering; pretext for the famous "pause," announced by M. Blum. Efforts were made to transfer the centre of gravity in the Cabinet more towards the Right, away from the influence of what the reactionary press termed the "Dictatorship of the masses." The first Cabinet of M. Chautemps succeeded that of M. Blum. A further devaluation of the franc took place. Right through the year 1937, however, the Popular Front stood firm and, indeed, increased its influence; not a little owing to the partial exposure of the subversive activities of the "Hooded Men." In February of this year another Cabinet crisis was provoked. M. Chautemps openly attacked the Communists. Popular feeling, however, ran high, and though M. Chautemps came back to office in a purely Radical ministry it was with a programme which all parties adhering to the Popular Front could accept.

But the reaction still had its big card to play. Frequent meetings in the South of France between British statesmen and leading French reactionaries were being reported. It was evident that a large-scale offensive was in preparation. In fact Chamberlain and his French allies had now come to the conclusion that something must be done quickly, and were determined to stake everything on a swift victory for Franco. Circumstances had altered, however, since the commencement of the rebellion. None but the wilfully blind could any longer ignore the immediate threat to French security which would result from a Franco triumph effected almost entirely with German and Italian aid. What Eden could stomach in 1936 he could no longer stomach in the Spring of 1938. He resigned, his going hastened at the instance of the dictators. But the reaction was now committed. Another French Cabinet resigned and the reaction began to campaign feverishly for "a government of national union," albeit making it clear that Communist participation could not be considered. The new government, M. Blum's second, was looked on as a mere stopgap.

In fact the moment for which the reaction had long been waiting seemed to have arrived. With an overwhelming preponderance in material poured into Spain by Hitler and Mussolini, Franco launched his Aragon offensive, making his great sweep towards the coast. Simultaneously the Popular Front was attacked from every side. In particular the employers adopted an attack of the utmost intransigence

towards Labour's demands for increased wages to balance the rise (amounting to no less than 40 per cent.) in the cost of living since the devaluation. The press of the Right jubilantly proclaimed the speedy annihilation of the Republican armies and the fall of Barcelona. Every effort was made to spread a feeling of despair, an effort in which Mr. Winston Churchill took his part, writing in *Paris-Soir*, the most widely read newspaper in France, that—

All resistance is broken . . . the Republican leaders will be well advised to negotiate the best terms possible while there is still time.

The offensive of the Two Hundred Families had developed into a charge !

But the charge has not reached its objective. On April 8th the Senate at the call of the reaction once more overthrew the government. Already, however, the continued strength of the Popular Front had been manifested. The Spanish Republican armies were holding their ground : it was clear that Franco would have no easy victory, while in and around Paris in reply to the employers' provocation, tens of thousands of metal workers, displaying exemplary discipline, were in occupation of their factories. Meetings and demonstrations on the grand scale were demanding adherence to the programme of the *Front Populaire* and the restoration to the Spanish Republic of its right to obtain arms.

Checked once more the British and French reactionaries are even now returning to the attack. The forthcoming visit to London of M. M. Daladier and Bonnet will certainly be made the occasion for a fresh attempt to suggest that France is becoming more amenable to Chamberlain's policy of capitulation. It is an attempt against which the peace forces must be on their guard. For in fact the *Front Populaire*, citadel of French democratic liberties and our own is still unbreached : the garrison grows daily stronger; in numbers, in determination, in unity.

# The Soviet Trial

BY R. PAGE ARNOT

THE TRIAL THAT ended on March 13 in Moscow gave a clear warning to the whole world. From most press comments in Western Europe and America it appears that this warning has not yet been heeded. This is not for the moment a question of the hostile comments of the capitalist press, or of the dull repetitions in various papers of the slanders and calumnies on Soviet justice of the same type as were refuted 18 months ago in D. N. Pritt's pamphlet on the trial of August, 1936. It is a question of the persistence in regarding the conspiracy laid bare by these trials as something exclusively "Russian," whereas the one feature that leaps to the eyes is the *international significance* of the trials, their significance for us in Britain and Europe, for the British Dominions, for America, for every other country. Yet every public event of the first quarter of 1938, the situation in China and Spain, the surrender of Chamberlain to the fascist aggressors, the Hitler conquest of Austria (occurring actually during the trial) cried aloud that this was not a domestic issue within the Soviet Union, but something that affects the masses in every country and is bound up with the issues of peace and democracy.

The evidence before the Soviet court in itself disclosed the existence of an *international fascist conspiracy against the international working class*. And if corroboration were needed of such a conspiracy against the interests of the working class, against the maintenance of peace and the liberties of the peoples, it is enough to listen to the march of the Nazi army corps across Austria.

The evidence given at the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., together with that made available by the public trials of August, 1936, in the case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre, and of January, 1937, in the case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre enable us to form a view of the extent of the conspiracy. The scope of the conspiracy widened as it grew. At first there were, within the Soviet Union, three main conspiratorial groups, the Trotskyites, the Rights and the Tuchachevsky group.

I. The *Trotskyites* (with whom may be taken the Zinovievites, headed by Zinoviev and Kamenev) had at one time been a "tendency" or "current" within the working class movement, where they put forward the false theory that "socialism could not be built up in one country." Inside the Soviet Union they were finally and overwhelmingly defeated in the Party Referendum held in 1927. No less than 724,000 members voted for the Bolsheviks, for the Central Committee and against the Trotskyites, who received only 4,000 votes. If all who

sympathised with Trotskyism in one way or another were reckoned in, the outside total would have come to no more than about 12,000. Their subsequent actions brought about their expulsion from the Party. A little later many prominent Trotskyites professed to have changed their attitude: they were readmitted to the Party, which gave them positions of trust in a number of cases. It is now clear that they had been instructed by the Trotskyite Centre to re-enter the Party as provocateurs in order to wreck socialist construction and to overthrow the Soviet Government. These formed the first strand of this world-wide conspiracy.

In view of the ridiculous references made in the press to Trotsky as an "old Bolshevik," it is pertinent here to recall the fact that Trotsky, outside the ranks of the Bolshevik Party, was an enemy of Lenin from 1903 to 1917. During the short period of his membership of the Party, Trotsky repeatedly struggled against the line of Lenin (even suggesting his death in 1918, according to Bukharin's testimony), and in 1921 in the months preceding the Xth Party Congress raised a serious faction, which led Lenin to propose the prohibition of such factional grouping in future. Scarcely was this decision taken than Trotsky in the same year 1921, formed the nucleus of a conspiracy against Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. For this purpose he instructed Krestinsky (with Pyatakov and Serebriakov, the "original Trotskyists") to enter into negotiations with General von Seeckt, head of the German Reichswehr, from whom, in return for espionage services, funds were to be acquired for Trotskyist propaganda at home and abroad. For eight years a quarter of a million marks passed between the parties to this contract.

II. The *Rights*, headed by Rykov, Tomsy and Bukharin, in 1927-8, had been opposed to the Party's general line for the industrialisation of the U.S.S.R. and for the collectivisation of agriculture, as set forth in the first Pyatiletka or Five-Year-Plan. Their views, which did not differ vastly from similar views expressed by many leaders of the Second International (with whom, incidentally, they sought to have connections) constituted the Right Deviation inside the Communist Parties and particularly within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They were routed at the Central Committee meeting of April, 1929, when Bukharin's reputation as a theoretician was destroyed. (The journal, *Time and Tide*, by referring to him as a "chief exponent of Orthodox Marxism" merely pleads its own ignorance alike of Marxism and of recent history). The class basis of the Right Deviation was the village rich peasant or kulak, of whom Lenin wrote twenty years ago, in words that sound prophetic of this conspiracy to set up a "kulak fascism":—

The kulaks are the most brutal, most ruthless and most savage of exploiters, who more than once in the history of other countries have restored the power of the landlords, tsars, priests and capitalists. (Collected Works, Vol. XXIII., pp. 206-7).

The Rights recognised their defeat, ostensibly abandoned their struggle and remained within the party. It has only now come to be known that they then organised secret groups, began on their career of counter-revolutionary activity and in 1932 linked up with the Trotskyites. The Rights formed the second strand in the conspiracy.

III. The *Tukhachevsky* group of military adventurers, who had set themselves Bonapartist aims, formed the third strand in the conspiracy. From the nature of their plot, they had been secret and conspiratorial from the very beginning.

The success of the Five-Year-Plan dashed the hopes of the conspirators, who had staked their cards on its collapse. Their hopes were raised again by the advent to power of Hitler Fascism in Germany. In that same year, 1933, the three strands of the conspiracy definitely formed the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." At Meran in 1933, Trotsky instructed Krestinsky that even the bloc would not be strong enough and that it was necessary for the bloc to come to terms with the Fascists with whom he had for some time been in contact. The Fascist powers were willing, but stipulated for the dismemberment of the U.S.S.R. (Ukraine to Germany, Byelorussia to Poland, Far Eastern Provinces to Japan, etc., etc.). The plotters eventually agreed: and thereupon proceeded to link up more closely with every counter-revolutionary remnant within the U.S.S.R., including bourgeois nationalists, Mensheviks, S.R.'s (the old terrorist party), old Tsarist police spies, etc.

The evolution of Trotskyism had now developed very far. Whatever these conspirators had been once in the years up to 1929-30 (and in some cases espionage and conspiracy had existed before that) Trotskyites and Rights had now been, as Stalin said, "transformed into a wild and unprincipled gang of wreckers, diversionists, spies and assassins acting on the instructions of the intelligence services of foreign states."

Apart from all sorts of wrecking (with the ulterior aim of causing discontent amongst the masses against the Soviet Government) and apart from the espionage service they must regularly furnish to their fascist masters, the conspirators staked their cards on three things:—

First: assassination of Soviet leaders.

Second: a *coup d'etat*, involving the seizure of the Kremlin.

Third: war by the Fascist powers upon the U.S.S.R., whose defeat it was their job to facilitate.

In their assassination plans they were responsible for the deaths of Kirov, Menshinsky, Kuibeshv and others. Yagoda saw to that. Maxim Gorky, friend of Stalin and stalwart defender of the Party line, was a serious obstacle to their plans. He was "removed." This genius of world literature died an unnatural death at the hands of the physicians whom Yagoda had suborned and blackmailed into becoming murderers.

The plan for the coup d'etat was to await a favourable moment,

and latterly was to follow on the war. But the partial discoveries of the year 1936 rattled Tukhachevsky, who in December of that year insisted that the coup d'état must be hurried forward. Accordingly, after the January, 1937, trial of Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, and the arrests of Rykov and Bukharin, the "contact centre" of the conspiracy (now headed by Rudzutak for the Rights, Krestinsky and Rosengolz for the Trotskyites, Tukhachevsky for the military group) hastened their preparations. The 15th May of last year was set for the coup d'état, which would precipitate the armed attack on the U.S.S.R.—if all the plans worked out. But their plans were brought to nought by the activity and vigilance of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs, headed by Yezhov.

The attack of the armed forces of the Fascist powers on the U.S.S.R. was to be facilitated at the crucial moment by the "opening of the front" to the Fascist armies. In this, as in other respects, the plotters were to be in the U.S.S.R., that "Fifth Column," on which Franco had relied in his advance on Madrid. But whereas in Spain the Government elected in February, 1936, had in its weakness failed to arrest Franco, Mola, Sanjurjo, Quiapo de Llano, and the other traitor generals, there was no weakness shown by the Soviet Government. Tukhachevsky and the other military chiefs arrested with him, paid the penalty of their treason in June of last year; and a similar fate has befallen the conspirators in the trial that has just ended.

The trial has been a demonstration of the power and stability of the Soviet Government, of the Socialist State of workers and peasants. But at the same time the trial is a most serious warning to the working class and the mass of the people outside the U.S.S.R. as to how the Fascists and their Trotskyist agents seek to operate in country after country. The complete report of the Trial now available in English should be studied by every militant worker, by everyone active in the peace movement and in the struggle against Fascism and War.

There are many lessons to be learned from that report: and there are still many such conspirators against peace and democracy and the interests of the working class in the countries of the capitalist world.

A terrible additional proof of the danger menacing practically every country was the annexation of Austria during the trial. Those who sat listening to the evidence in the Moscow court of how all had been planned for the seizure of Byelorussia and the Ukraine by the Fascist powers, how a National Fascist party was being organised, how the enemy forces within and the enemy forces without were to act in unison, how the "front was to be opened," suddenly received the news that a parallel process was at that moment being carried through in Austria. It was the same pattern. The secret mobilisation of troops, the agreement between the Fascist powers, the attack concerted with the conspirators and agents within and finally the "opening of the front."

In the French Republic the discovery at the beginning of this winter of the conspiracy of the Cagoulaards, the sinister activities of Doriot and other groups in the pay of Hitler and Mussolini, the Trotskyists operating against the unity of the working class and the mass of the people shows again that the same pattern is being traced out.

In Britain the position is peculiar. For here, in the oldest country of capitalism where forms of bourgeois democracy first developed, it is the Government which is taking step after step in the direction of fascism. In its foreign policy, the National Government, obedient to the millionaires of the City, has, in one thing after another, beginning in 1931 with its connivance at Japan's seizure of Manchuria, yielded to the growth of Fascism and the aggression of the Fascist powers; while at the same time it has taken steps to dismantle the peace machinery of the League of Nations. From the beginning the National Socialist Adolf Hitler, received the admiration and support of the National Labourist, Ramsay MacDonald. The National Government has betrayed its hostility to the Franco-Soviet Pact and has sought to replace it by its scheme for a Four Power Pact with Italy, Germany and a French Republic subordinated to British pressure. Economically and in other ways it has in fact supported the Italian and German aggression in Spain and Europe, and Japanese aggression in the Pacific. The increasingly pro-Fascist policies, policies of betrayal of the interests of peace and democracy have been cumulative in their effects. The time approached where it was no longer necessary to keep up pretences as regards the League of Nations and the pro-Fascist policies. The dismissal of Eden was the dropping of the mask. It was at the same time the revelation of a subservience to the aggressor, such as no British government had ever before admitted.

It is not only the growth of reaction leading to Fascism inside Britain that is alarming, but the increasing direct influence of Nazi and Mussolini propaganda upon the British public. Those who a few years ago condemned Fascism are now profuse with apologies for Hitler and Mussolini. Throughout the whole press from the fascist *Daily Mail* and the pro-fascist *Times* and *Observer*, runs a gradation to the weakened and toned-down attitude of the newspapers of the left. The sentiment "Let us treat Al Capone as a gentleman—he has plenty of money" is paralleled by the weakened resistance of the organs that claim to represent democratic opinion.

A similar process is seen inside the political parties. Apart from the Mosley Fascists demanding the dismemberment of British Imperialism's possessions for the benefit of the Nazis, partisans of Hitler are to be found elsewhere. In the Liberal Party, Lord Lothian and his group, in the Labour Party, George Lansbury and several Labour peers such as Lord Noel Buxton are backing the colonial or other demands of Hitler. Thus in one way or another the influence of Fascist propaganda is growing in Britain.

Now it is impossible both to support and resist Fascist aggression. It is impossible at one and the same time to be partisans of Hitler and a whole-hearted supporter of the forces opposed to Hitler. Inevitably the view that the Fascist demands are "not unreasonable" entails the view that the opposition to Fascism tends to be "unreasonable." It is an easy road to Hell. The spread of Fascist propaganda means the spread of anti-Soviet propaganda. And since there never needed any influence from Hitler to make the millionaires and their press organs anti-Bolshevik, the one place where the Fascist anti-Soviet influence could be most effectively lodged was in the organs of the Left. Therefore the most disquieting feature of the last few years of growing danger of war and Fascism is the readiness with which supposed Left organs show themselves willing to attack the Soviet Union, which is the world's main bulwark against war and Fascism.

It is in this light that one must view the extraordinary outbursts of venom against the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics that were presented to the readers as "comment." I do not refer here to the numerous denials, from Chamberlain downwards, published in relation to those British subjects mentioned in the evidence in connection with the work of the British Intelligence Service. It is common form for a Government to hide the identity of its secret agents and those who know this will know also what measure of credence to give to the other denials published. I refer to the fact that the traditional anti-Soviet standpoint of the *Daily Mail* was in essence repeated by the leaders of the I.L.P., by such journals as *Time and Tide* and *Forward*, and by a number of other persons and publications. It is scarcely to be wondered at that the *Times*, the openly pro-Fascist organ of the Cliveden clique, would buttress its support of a Hitler alliance by a venomous leading article against the Soviet Union. Nor is it surprising in general that the capitalist press, always anti-Soviet, should seize the opportunity to carry forward still further its policy of isolating the U.S.S.R. But it is hard to see why the press of the Left should join in the chorus of the millionaire press, unless we take into account this recent seeping in of Fascist propaganda and influence, often in the subtlest form.

As soon as the trial was announced the Nazis poured forth an additional stream of anti-Soviet propaganda; and so far from understanding the significance of this, British newspapers echoed the Fascist calumnies.

Like a congregation of grave and politic sheep, they censoriously discussed the strong measures taken by the shepherd, to the great glee of the wolf-pack. For it must have caused much pleasure in Berlin to read that the *News-Chronicle* was gravely classing Soviet justice with the Nazi judicial atrocities.

A reader of the paper stoutly replied to this nonsense as follows (*News-Chronicle*, March 14, 1938):—

If German and Russian trials are in the same class, why are the former held in secret and the latter in public? Why are foreign diplomats and journalists allowed to be present in Moscow, whereas they were debarred from attending the trial of Pastor Niemöller? And, incidentally, Roehm was shot without a trial of any description.

When the comment condescends to be less vaguely abusive we get professions of incredulity. From the *Daily Herald*, organ of Odham's millionaire press, a specimen of this method can be taken. It says: "Belief in the charges, the evidence, the confessions is impossible to the sane mind." Notice first the tricky inference that some hundreds of millions of human beings, who do not happen to be afflicted by the incredulity kink of the *Daily Herald* writer are thereby deemed to be insane.

Notice second that the sentence is intended to convey to the reader that the trial was a "frame-up": on which showing therefore that the judicial organs and the whole of the leaders of the U.S.S.R. would have been guilty of a foul conspiracy against the prisoners and against mankind, which is almost precisely what Hitler howls out in his maniacal speeches and what the Trotskyites faithfully echo. But here the echo comes from the organ of Odham's and of the Trades Union Congress.

Notice in the third place that there is no argument or reason given for this astounding attack on the U.S.S.R. Hitler is not required to give reasons, nor is it expected of him. But it is both required and expected of British journalists if they are to be thought of as anything better than prostitutes of the pen.

Notice fourthly that this type of comment is merely a repetition of what was slanderously said in August, 1936, and which was subsequently painstakingly exposed by the English jurist present at the trial. We must presume that these journalists had read the pamphlet on "The Zinoviev Trial," by D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P.: and, we may hope, had blushed as they read it. Unless the leading Labour paper is prepared to lump a leading member of the Labour Party (Mr. Pritt is on the Executive Committee of the Labour Party) along with the multitudes whom it deems insane, then why does it unblushingly repeat the slanders, especially when the evidence of the three public trials is cumulative in its cogency?

I think the answer must be given that the commentators were not writing from a disinterested standpoint; that while all of them were affected by the Fascist-cum-Trotskyist propaganda, there were some of them who had an axe to grind.

Let us take the *Daily Herald*, on whose board, if I mistake not, sit Sir Walter Citrine and Mr. Ernest Bevin. A little less than two years ago these Right Wing Labour leaders had to face the growth of a movement of opinion for a united front of the working class—national and international. I do not think they could object to the

statement that they were and are bitterly opposed to just this united front (for, of course, they do not oppose united fronts in general, as is shown by their solidarity with the National Government on the arms programme or their prolonged support of the Cabinet's "non-intervention" policy towards Spain). But the mainspring of this movement to a united front was the respect and sympathy in which the masses held the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Therefore it is not surprising that, particularly from June, 1936, onwards, the *Daily Herald* sought to blacken the face of the Soviet Union: while it is notorious that the attacks on the August, 1936, trial were such as to provide a suitable atmosphere for Sir Walter Citrine's anti-Soviet attitude, especially at the September, 1936, Trades Union Congress. Once begun on this course, the *Daily Herald* continued until during this last year it more than once overtook and surpassed the *Daily Mail* as a purveyor of anti-Soviet propaganda. Meantime there was no utterance of either Mr. Bevin or Sir Walter Citrine to indicate that they were criticsers of the anti-Soviet line of the paper.

But it is not only these particular Right Wing leaders in Britain. Some of the leaders of the Second International took the same attitude to the trial—and basically for the same reason that they too had an axe to grind. Indeed it was the same axe. During these last twenty months, when Spain's agony and China's sufferings together with the whole international situation cried aloud for a united front, for a people's front to defend democracy in its need and the threatened peace of the world; when in Spain and in France that united front had withstood Fascism and had given a precious example of what unity could do; it was precisely the Right Wing leaders in Britain, Holland and the Scandinavian countries who stubbornly resisted any step to unity. They are resisting it now. This trial's campaign against the U.S.S.R. was and is their weapon in the fight against unity.

To the other commentators whose articles on the trial were peculiarly subject to Fascist propaganda, the *Daily Worker* (the only newspaper to give a correct and true appreciation of the trials and the conspiracy) has already given effective answers, particularly in the cases of H. N. Brailsford and the I.L.P. leaders, whose position as dupes of Trotsky or agents of Trotsky is still to be examined.

Accomplices also figure amongst the commentators (e.g., the Menshevik Dan), and their denials are as natural and require as little credence as that of any other criminal. There are also questions of how the evidence given reflects on the British Intelligence Service, its methods and the war policy of the Government which employs the secret agents. But it is enough for the moment to have dealt with one example to show how, not only an attempt was made to mislead the British readers of newspapers and journals, but also to create against the Soviet Union a war atmosphere which could serve only the purposes of the Fascist warmongers and the Trotskyist agents.

To meet and quell this terrible danger, the international fascist conspiracy against the international working class, against peace and democracy. The danger is here, at home. The utmost vigilance is needed against Fascist ideology, Fascist propaganda, Trotskyist activities, Fascist and Trotskyist agents and provocateurs. The example of Austria betrayed by the Fascist-alliance policy of Chamberlain should thunder in our ears that the interests of the British people are being and will be betrayed so long as this Chamberlain Government is allowed to exist. The example of Spain cries aloud what danger can be done by the "Fifth Column" of Fascists, and Trotskyists, inside a country.

Those who do not merely repeat the phrase, but have fully grasped that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, may well be grateful to the vigilance that has been displayed in the U.S.S.R. For by uncovering this conspiracy the organs of Soviet justice have struck a blow against Fascism and for the maintenance of peace and democracy throughout the world, that can without exaggeration be ranked along with the glorious struggle of the fighters in Spain and in China.

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## Sold Out !

The April issue was completely sold out

**NOW FOR THIS NUMBER**

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# Mongolia and the Far East War

BY G. D. R. PHILLIPS

MONGOLIA IS TO-DAY in three parts : the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic ; the Mongolian People's Republic ; and Inner Mongolia. Buryat-Mongolia is a part of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, and thus part of the U.S.S.R. ; the Mongolian People's Republic lies to the south of Buryatia, outside the U.S.S.R. ; Inner Mongolia is a general term for a region including the Chinese provinces of Ninghsia, Suiyuan, Hopei and Chahar, and lies to the south of the Mongolian People's Republic ("Outer Mongolia"). The Japanese attack on China includes an advance into Inner Mongolia ; this advance is of the greatest importance : It is the real fundamental part of the whole war that Japan is making on China. From success in this attack the Japanese imperialists hope to achieve much. It is against this attack that the former Chinese Red Army, now the Chinese Eighth Route Army, is fighting with a bravery, and a brilliance of strategy, that have won world admiration ; its strategy, now adopted by the Chinese forces as a whole, may in the end—despite the enormous preponderance of Japanese arms—break the Japanese offensive. From the attack on Inner Mongolia the Japanese imperialists hope to get a base for further war : either northward against the Soviet Union, or southward to mop up the rest of China.

From any other base than Mongolia it would be almost impossible to make a really dangerous attack on the Soviet Union or even on China. The Japanese militarists know the strength of Soviet defences along the frontier of Manchukuo : they have tested them many times and in many places, and they realise that merely to make a frontal attack against them would be like butting the head against a wall. So in order to detach the rich Maritime Province from the U.S.S.R. they propose to attack from the rear, by cutting across the Mongolian People's Republic, and across the narrow stretch of Soviet territory between the frontier and Lake Baikal. In this way they would sever the Trans-Siberian Railway and be able to use the Angara River and the main road from Irkutsk to reach the River Lena—and cut Siberia in two. To reach Baikal they must first have control of the Mongolian People's Republic. They have tried to obtain this control ever since 1919—before it was the Mongolian People's Republic. Their methods will be examined later.

Similarly with China. To attack inwards from the coast only leads the Japanese eventually up long, narrow river valleys (the Yangtse-

kiang, Han-kiang, Wei-ho), with high hills on either side from which it is easy for the native Chinese to attack. The Japanese lines of communication become enormously drawn-out and vulnerable throughout their length ; meanwhile the Chinese have an excellent base of operations in the fertile plains of Szechwan (whence their civilisation originally probably sprang), beyond the reach of the long, straggling Japanese lines. In the first week of the war a knowledgeable Chinese told me that the Government intended to hold on to the coastal regions as long as possible, in order to gain time and materials, and then when forced they planned to withdraw into Szechwan. Months later, the Government did move to Chungking, in Szechwan. Now if the Japanese were to follow them, they would have to go 850 miles or more up the Yangtse-kiang—with long stretches of difficult country to hold—to I-chang, and then a further 350 miles up the Yangtse in a narrow gorge easily defended the whole way. Therefore, to follow the Government to Chungking would mean a line of communication over a thousand miles long without any breadth or base, almost all the way. That would be a totally untenable position.

But if the Japanese Imperialists can first make Inner Mongolia a base, they can come down from the north into Szechwan. And that is in fact what they have tried to do ; only they are finding that they have been in too much of a hurry, that they should have made greater efforts to organise their base in Inner Mongolia, so as to prevent the Eighth Route Army from cutting them off. They are now trying to remedy that error of calculation. They found that their rear was being so seriously threatened both by partisan fighters from the Chinese peasantry and by the regular guerilla forces of the former Red Army, which controls a large area on the Shansi-Hopei border, that they had to cease their siege of one town on their southward march and return to the north to “pacify” the population. They were for many months unable to get beyond the area around Taiyuanfu. It is because of this need for an established base on which they can more or less rely that the Japanese are now promoting a “Mongolian State” in Inner Mongolia, with a capital at Kweihwa—an old project of theirs. It is because of this need that they have now seized the railways of Southern Shansi—though it is no more than the railways that they hold.

There are two principal roads from Inner Mongolia across the Mongolian People's Republic, to Buryat-Mongolia and Baikal. Both these roads run north-westward across the Gobi desert through Ulan-Bator (formerly Urga), the capital of the M.P.R., from Kalgan, which is now in Japanese hands and which lies 250 miles from the M.P.R. frontier by one road and slightly more by the other. The eastern road is really little more than a telegraph line, the poles marking the way ; but because of those poles it is considered safer than the western route, a road which is often wiped out by sand-storms in summer and blizzards in winter. About half-way along the western

road, another road branches off to the west from Sair-Ussu to Uliassutai, Kobdo and northern Kazakstan. West of Kalgan, on the Peiping-Paotow Railway (the whole of which is held, more or less strongly, by the Japanese), is Kwei-hwa, whence goes another route north-westward. This route in the middle of the Gobi crosses the route from Ulan-Bator to Tibet. The Tibet road itself is highly uncertain, and neither of these roads in any case is more than a somewhat arbitrary way followed by caravans, though serviceable enough for peace-time purposes. The other roads are not much better.

From Ulan-Bator, however, there is a first-class motor road for 300 miles northward to Ulan-Ude, capital of Buryatia—as well as a telegraph line. There is also a frequent and regular air service between these two cities, but this, of course, has no strategic importance. Most of the other roads, tracks or telegraph lines (which serve the same purpose), from Ulan-Bator go westwards to Uliassutai. The only reasonable route to the east is by the Kerulen River and Lake Dalai Nor. This route is easily defended, and in addition it can only be reached from a point very near to the Soviet frontier at Manchuli, so that any army attempting an advance westward along that route would run great risk of being cut off in the rear. The main road from Ulan-Bator to Ulan-Ude is the only reasonable way from the Mongolian People's Republic to the Buryat-Mongol A.S.S.R. The road crosses the frontier at Kiakhta, and the Selenga River, which is navigable, crosses about twenty miles to the west.

At the beginning of February, 1938, an important development has just been announced. Construction has started on a railway from Ulan-Ude to Kyakhta, on the border of the Mongolian People's Republic. It will be 200 miles long, and will be finished this year.

If Japan could capture it, Buryatia would be a rich prize indeed. Japan badly needs iron, coal, manganese, wolfram (tungsten), tin, copper and other non-ferrous metals. There is coal in many parts of Buryatia (the best is in the west) as well as anthracite. Iron ores are widespread. There are large deposits of manganese, wolfram, molybdenum, tin, copper, bismuth, supplies of the rare metals, as well as of graphite, mica, asbestos and many other valuable minerals. In the Aginski aimak (district) are deposits of many kinds of precious stone. Besides all these, there are four highly important gold-bearing regions, while the metal is recovered in smaller quantities in many other parts. And there is the wealth of fur and forest.

The mineral resources of Outer Mongolia have scarcely been explored. However, it is known that there are large quantities of minerals which are almost untouched. There is coal in many regions, and near several towns it is mined by primitive means. In the last few years the coal deposits at Nalaiha (22 miles from Ulan-Bator) have been mechanised, and the coal is used to supply a large industrial combinat in Ulan-Bator, as well as the domestic needs of the popula-

tion of the city. Gold is mined by primitive methods in various parts of the country, and there are legendary stories of big deposits.

What is, or is likely to be, the attitude of the populations of the three parts of Mongolia, in face of continued Japanese aggression? The answer to that, and their ability to resist Japanese force, lies in their history, particularly over the last thirty years. And this history will show the extent and the methods of Japanese plotting and manœuvring in Mongolia.

#### OUTER MONGOLIA

After the fall of Jenghiz Khan's empire, Mongolia became the scene of perpetual internecine strife. It came under the sway of the Chinese, who split it into Inner (southern) and Outer (northern) Mongolia, colonising the first more than the second. A large part of Inner Mongolia had become, by the beginning of this century, an agricultural country, with a large number of Chinese colonisers. Outer Mongolia was still a herd-raising country, with social structure as it was in Jenghiz Khan's time. At the top of the Outer Mongol hierarchy were princes and head lamas; below them was an enormous priesthood; and at the bottom, supporting all these in practical idleness, were the arats or peasantry. The coming of capitalism from abroad, eighty years ago, made the position of the arats even worse; so that the whole nation stood in danger of dying out. In 1911 Outer Mongolia, as a result of the Chinese Revolution, became autonomous, but fell under Russian imperialist domination, and the position of the arats remained at least as bad as before. Japan recognised Russia's colonial "special interests," and agreed not to intervene.

During the Civil War and intervention in Russia, Japan made her first attempt to obtain control of Mongolia, through the Russian White Guard Semenov. To him the Japanese imperialists suggested the establishment of a "Great Mongolian Government" including Inner and Outer Mongolia and Buryatia. A conference of Inner Mongol princes, with the Japanese command and Semenov, in Chita in 1919 made plans for such a government, but they were brought to nothing by the Red Army's conquest of the White Guards in the Far East. The Japanese then sent into Mongolia the notorious Japanese agent General Sui Shi-chen, of the "Anfu" clique then ruling in Peking. He destroyed Outer Mongolia's autonomy, but protected the privileges of the Mongol ruling classes. However, his government was so oppressive that the whole nation, even including some of the feudal lords, united to throw him out. A great part of the leadership in this movement was taken by a group, headed by Suhe-Bator, Choi-Balsan and Losola, which later became the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party; it aimed at throwing out the agents of Japan, establishing relations with Soviet Russia, and replacing the princes' rule in Mongolia with that of the people. When Sui Shi-chen's support ceased with the fall of the Anfu clique, he had to flee the country.

Next, the Japanese sent into Mongolia Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, the "mad baron," and supplied him with arms and officers. In February, 1921, he seized Urga and set up a "Mongol Government" of the most reactionary princes and lamas, under Bogdo-Gegen, head of the Mongol priesthood. Ungern's terrorism was the worst that Mongolia had experienced. The People's Revolutionary Party in March, 1921, held its first congress to unite the country to throw him out. It also declared itself anti-imperialist and anti-feudal, with the aim of establishing a State on the beginnings of revolutionary democracy. It set up a Provisional People's Government to co-ordinate all partisan detachments fighting against the White Guards. The following month the Provisional Government asked the Government of the R.S.F.S.R. for military help, and the Russian Soviet Government agreed. Ungern-Sternberg had already moved his forces to Troitskosavsk, on the Soviet frontier, aiming to cut the Trans-Siberian Railway at Baikal in accordance with the plans of the Japanese command. In June, the Red Army defeated him completely at Troitskosavsk, and pursued him into Mongolia helped by Mongol partisans and the new Mongol People's Army. In July the Mongol Government asked the Red Army to remain in Mongolia until all the White forces had been destroyed, and in fact units remained until 1925, when they were withdrawn—although the Mongol Government had not requested withdrawal. The Mongol Government expressed its gratitude for the Red Army's help and for its disciplined behaviour to the peasantry.

Since that time, the Mongol Government has gradually broken down the feudal structure that formerly existed, destroying the privileges and powers of the princes and priesthood—especially since the death in 1924 of Bogdo-Gegen, when a Republic was proclaimed. Their political power and titles have been entirely abolished, their influence very much cut down, their enormous property decimated—the surplus being handed to the poor arats—and their special pasturage rights destroyed. Universal franchise for all earning their own living has been established for both local and national government. Power is vested in the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Little Hural (Assembly); these are responsible to the Little Hural, which meets once annually, and to the Great Hural, which meets every three years; members of both Hurals are elected. The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party has adopted as its aim a gradual transition to a non-capitalist form of society. The Government has effected close political, economic and cultural ties with the Soviet Union.

The reactionaries did not give in to this revolutionary programme without a hard struggle. They early turned for help to Japan and the Chinese war-lords. The Mongol Government discovered plot after plot, involving even important members of the Government itself. The trail always led to Bogdo-Gegen while he lived, but his authority with the peasants was still too high for him to be touched. Many important

officials established connections with foreign capitalist concerns, which began to get a hold in the country. One of the best-known leaders of the Party, Danzan, used his position in this way to enrich himself. Such behaviour was forbidden by the Government. Danzan's foreign connections were found to go as far as treason, and he was shot. In 1926, lamas at Bain-Tumen and Van-Kuren tried to organise a rising ; their defeat enabled the Government to attack the lamas' political influence more strongly than before. In 1928 the reactionaries received their worst blow, when the representatives of the poor peasantry obtained the majority in the Seventh Congress of the Party and turned the right wing out of the leadership.

The Mongol leaders made certain "left" mistakes. The principal one was an attempt to collectivise the peasantry in a hurry. This was corrected in 1932, when the Little Hural laid down that in the present conditions of Mongolia only the simplest forms of co-operative agriculture could be operated. As a result, the head of livestock in the country has increased rapidly.

In 1924, general military training for the youth of the working population was established. In Mongolia, where roads are few and railways do not exist, cavalry form a very important section of the fighting forces. The Mongols are excellent—perhaps the world's best—horsemen, and their Army, despite the comparative smallness of the whole population (under a million), is formidable enough.

*(To be continued)*

# LENIN & GORKY

## More Letters

[*This is the concluding instalment of the series of Lenin's Letters to Maxim Gorky, which have been specially translated for the LABOUR MONTHLY.*]

From *Collected Works*, 2nd ed., Vol. XVII.

Page 81.

DEAR A. M.,

What on earth are you doing ? It's simply terrible, really it is !

Yesterday I read in *Rech* your answer to the "howl" over Dostoyevsky, and I was prepared to rejoice, but to-day the liquidator paper has come, and it contains one paragraph from your article which was not in *Rech*.

This paragraph reads :

"But it is necessary to postpone the search for god for *a time* (only for a time ?) for it is a useless occupation : there is no point in searching where nothing is assumed. You cannot reap without sowing. You haven't any god, you haven't yet (yet !) set him up. Gods are not sought for, *they are set up* ; life is not invented, but created."

Which means that you are against the "search for god" only for "a time !!" Which means that you are against the search for God solely in order to replace it by the setting up of a god ! !

Well, and isn't it really terrible that you can come to such a conclusion ?

The search for a god is no more different from the setting up of a god or the founding of a god or the creation of a god than a yellow devil is different from a blue devil. To speak of a search for a god not in order to declare yourself against *all* devils and gods *of any kind*, against any form of ideological substitution of corpses (any little god is substituting one corpse for another, even if it is the cleanest, most ideal, not sought for but set up little god, it makes no difference), but in order to prefer a blue devil to a yellow one is a hundred times worse than not to open your mouth at all.

In the very freest of countries, in countries where it is *quite* out of place to appeal "to democracy," to the people, to public opinion, and to science," in such countries (America, Switzerland, and so on), the people and the workers are drugged with especial zeal by this very idea of a clean, spiritual, set-up little god. Just because any religious idea, any idea of any little god, any coquetting even with a little god is inexpressibly loathsome, and is regarded with especial patience

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(and in part even with benevolence) by the *democratic* bourgeoisie—for that very reason it is the most dangerously loathsome, the most infamous of “infections.” A million physical sins, obscenities, violations and infections are far more easily laid bare to the crowd and so are *much less* dangerous than the *subtle*, spiritual idea, tricked out in the smartest of “ideological costumes,” of a little god. The catholic priest who seduces girls (I have just happened to read about one in a certain German newspaper), is *far less* dangerous precisely for “democracy,” than a priest without cassock, a priest without a crude religion, an ideological and democratic priest preaching the setting up and creation of a god. For it is *easy* to unmask the first priest, to condemn him and drive him out, but it is *not possible* to drive out the second so simply, it is a thousand times more difficult to unmask him, not one “frail and pitifully vacillating” citizen would agree to “condemn” him.

And you, knowing the “frailty and pitiful vacillation” (of the Russian: why the Russian? Is the Italian any better?) *suburban* spirit, bewilder that spirit with the sweetest of poisons, the one most thickly coated with sugar-icing and covered with all sorts of pretty coloured paper wrappers.

Really, it's terrible.

“We have had enough of the spitting on oneself which passes with us for self-criticism.”

But to set up a god, isn't that the *worst* form of spitting on oneself? Any man occupying himself with setting up a *god* or even merely allowing one to be set up is *spitting on himself* in the worst possible fashion, and, instead of with “activity,” occupying himself *with that very same* self-contemplation, self-admiration, and moreover, such a man “contemplates” the most filthy, stupid, servile features or featurettes of his own “ego” divinified by the creation of a god.

From not the personal but the social aspect *any* form of setting up a god is that very same *amorous self-contemplation* indulged in by stupid suburbanism, by fragile petty-citizenism, the dreamy “spitting on self” of the philistines and the petty bourgeoisie, “despairing and backward” (as you were good enough to say very accurately of their *spirit*, only you shouldn't have said “Russian” but *suburban*, for the Jewish, Italian, English—they *all have the same features*, everywhere lousy suburbanism is equally infamous, while “democratic suburbanism” occupied with the ideological substitution of corpse for corpse is especially infamous).

As I study your article closely and puzzle how this error of yours could creep in, I am amazed. What is it? The vestiges of the “Testament,” which you *yourself* did not approve of? Echoes of it?

Or something else—for instance an unsuccessful attempt to bend yourself to the *general democratic* instead of to the *proletarian* viewpoint? Perhaps for a talk to “democracy generally.” You wanted (forgive me

the expression) to talk baby talk, as one does with children? Perhaps "for the sake of popular exposition" to the suburbanites you wanted for a moment to grant *his*, or *their*, the suburbanites', prejudices?

But surely that is an unsound method in all senses and in all regards?

I have written above that in *democratic* countries it would be *quite* out of place for a proletarian writer to appeal "to democracy, to the people, to public opinion, and to science." Well, but in the case of our Russia? Such an appeal is *not quite* in place, for here also it would be flattering bourgeois prejudices. Such an appeal is general to the point of fogginess, even Izgoyev of "Russkaya Misl" would sign it *with both hands*. Then why resort to such slogans, which *you yourself* can distinguish easily enough from Izgoyevism, but which the reader cannot distinguish? Why put out a democratic crepe for the reader instead of a clear differentiation between the *suburbans* (fragile, pitifully vacillating, backward, despairing, self-contemplating, god-erecting, god-building, god-conniving, self-spitting, fatuously-anarchistic—good word that! and so on and so on), and the *proletariat* (who know how to be bold not with words, who know how to distinguish the "science and public opinion" of the *bourgeoisie* from their own, the bourgeois from proletarian democracy?).

Why are you doing it?

It's devilishly upsetting.

Yours,

V. U.

P.S.—We sent the novel by newspaper post. Did you receive it?

P.P.S.—Take your cure in hand more seriously, really, so that you can travel in the winter without catching chills (they're dangerous in the winter). Yours V. Ulyanov.

Written in the middle of November, 1913.

First printed in 1924 in *Lenin Miscellany*, Vol. I.

Printed from the manuscript.

Page 84.

On the question of god, the divine, and everything connected with it, you have got yourself involved in a contradiction: the same, in my view, which I pointed out in our talks during our last meeting at Capri. You broke (or seemed to have broken) with the "Vperiod" group without having noticed their ideological bases.

And so now. You are "extremely vexed." You "cannot understand how the words 'for a time' slipped in"—so you write—and at the same time you defend the idea of god and the setting up of a god.

"God is the complex of those ideas worked out by the tribe, the nation, humanity, which stimulate and organise those social feelings which have as their purpose the binding of personality with society, the bridling of zoological individualism."

That theory is openly bound up with Bogdanov and Lunacharsky's theory or theories.

And it is openly inaccurate and openly reactionary. In imitation of the Christian Socialists (the worst form of "socialism" and its worst distortion) you employ a method which (despite your finest intentions) repeats the hocus-pocus of clericalism: you extract from the idea of God that which *historically*, and in all *worldly respects*, is in it ("impurity, prejudices, the sanctification of ignorance and oppression" on the one hand, of "feudalism and the monarchy" on the other) and moreover, instead of the historical and worldly reality you add to the idea of god a good little suburban phrase (God=the "ideas stimulating and organising the social feelings.").

In so doing you are trying to say something "good and fine," to point to "Truth-Justice" and that sort of thing. But your good intention remains your own personal property, a subjective "innocent desire." Once you had written it it was given to the *masses*, and its *importance* is determined not by your good intention, but by the *correlation of social forces*, the objective correlation of classes. Owing to this correlation the *result* (despite your will and independently of your consciousness) the result is that you have touched up, sugared over the idea of the clericals, Purishkevich, Nicholas the 2nd, and Mr. Struve, for *in practice* the idea of God assists them to keep the people in slavery. By embellishing the idea of god you have embellished the chains with which they fetter the ignorant workers and peasants. See, say the priests and Co., how good and profound is this idea (the idea of God) as even *your* democrats, leaders admit, and we (the priests and Co.) serve that idea.

It is not correct that God is the complex of ideas stimulating and organising the social feelings. That is Bogdannvist *idealism*, obscuring the material origin of ideas. God is (historically and in the worldly aspect) first and foremost a complex of ideas engendered by the dull, suppressed state of man and external nature and class oppression—ideas *consolidating* that state of suppression, *intensifying* the class struggle. There was a time in history when, despite that origin and that highly actual significance of the idea of God, the struggle of democracy and the proletariat was carried on in the form of the struggle of *one religious idea* against another.

But that time has long since passed.

Now both in Europe and in Russia any, even the most subtle, the most well-intentioned defence or justification of the idea of God is a justification of reaction.

Your entire definition is reactionary and bourgeois through and through. God=the complex of ideas which "stimulate and organise those social feelings which have as their purpose the binding of personality with society, the bridling of zoological individualism."

Why is it reactionary? Because it embellishes the clerical-feudal

idea of "bridling" zoology. In reality "zoological individualism" was not bridled by the idea of God, it was bridled by the primitive herd and the primitive commune. The idea of God has *always* drugged and dulled "social feelings," replacing the vital by carrion, being *always* the idea of slavery (the worst, the most hopeless form of slavery). Never has the idea of God "bound up personality with society," but it has always *bound* the oppressed classes to faith in the *divinity* of the oppressors.

In a bourgeois sense also your definition is unscientific, unhistoric, for it is based on groundless, generalised, "Robinsonesque" conceptions generally, and not on the definite *classes* of a definite historical epoch.

The idea of God possessed by a savaga Zirani and suchlike is one thing (and by the semi-savages also) that of Struve and Co. is quite another. In both cases the idea is supported by the class hegemony (and the idea supports that hegemony). The "popular" conception of God and the divine is "popular" hebetude, a state of suppression, ignorance, just as is the "popular" conception of the Tsar, of wood-spirits, of dragging wives about by their hair. How you can call the "popular conception" of God democratic I simply don't understand.

It is not correct that philosophic idealism "always has in view only the interests of personality." By comparison with Gassendi did Descartes have the interests of personality more in view? Or Fichte and Hegel as against Feuerbach?

That "the setting up of a god is a process of further development and accumulation of social elements in the individuum and in society," that is simply terrible! If there were freedom in Russia all the bourgeoisie would exalt you to the skies for this sociology and theology of a purely bourgeois type and character.

Well, that is enough for the time being. Even so this letter has dragged out. Once more I firmly shake your hand and wish you good health.

Yours,

V. U.

December, 1913.

First printed in 1924 in *Lenin Miscellany*, Vol. I.

Printed from the manuscript.

# The Philosophy of a Natural Scientist— A Reply

BY H. LEVY

*[Last month we published an article by Clemens Dutt reviewing Professor Levy's book "A Philosophy for a Modern Man." This month in this article Professor Levy replies to certain points of criticism made in that review.]*

VERY LITTLE LIGHT worth shedding can be thrown on the working-class struggle except by those intimately engaged in it. Two conclusions follow. First that what is written is drawn through the fire of practice : secondly that to-day what is written cannot be withheld for lengthy reflection. One does one's best in an urgent situation. From this it follows that the book so drastically denounced by Clemens Dutt is probably honeycombed with errors and bad analysis. I should say that its weakest part is probably that dealing with sociological change, and those parts that interest professional philosophers; on these I should be glad of helpful criticism. The trouble about Clemens Dutt's review is that it is entirely unhelpful, inaccurate in its criticism, shallow in its analysis, and undialectical in its manner of approach. Nowhere does he ask himself, as he ought, "What is there new in this for me and my class ? How much of it can we therefore make our own ?" In fact he does not seek the contribution, if any, this book makes to the process that is dialectical materialism, but to find how close Levy gets to this position *regarded as a finished analysis*. One is made to feel not that this is a joint enterprise to which we are all attempting to contribute but that one is an outsider butting in. Apart from a few well known quotations from Lenin and Engels he does not attempt to make a concise statement of what that position is so that his readers may understand what he is driving at. Rather does he set out to show that as I am basically mechanist (undefined), dialectical materialism (unexplained) is by implication something other than what I am expounding; just as the theists to-day will gleefully tell us that since science has outgrown mechanistic materialism, theism must be true. Dutt imagines himself within a brilliantly illuminated circle of light, while I, poor mechanical devil, am clockworking my way about in the outer darkness. "You have been warned," he booms out, "remember the fate of Bukharin and Dühring."

My book has been attacked on several fronts :

1. By logical positivists who maintain that I have not proved that most of my problems are not simply language difficulties, which would disappear if I would only use words capable of experimental verification. I ought to build up such a language first. My reply is unprintable.
2. I avoid difficulties by being too abstract.
3. I make difficulties by being too concrete.
4. I have not used the language of Marxism—unity and interpenetration of opposites, negation of negation, quantity into quality, etc.—although I have expounded the ideas.
5. I am a mechanist. This from Clemens Dutt. Unfortunately for his proof I do not believe any of the things he says I believe.

Let us see how he establishes his thesis. As far as I can recollect in recent years the first attempt in a British journal to state in sharp form what Dialectical Materialism meant was in March, 1932, by Clemens Dutt in the *LABOUR MONTHLY* some time after some of us had, without avail, endeavoured to get a sensible statement about it from those who presumably ought to have known (including Clemens Dutt). He would probably now admit that it wasn't a particularly brilliant effort, but at any rate it was an honest attempt at that time, when most of us knew little about it. A year later I wrote the essay which appears in *Aspects of Dialectical Materialism*, from which Dutt now quotes as follows : " I doubt very much whether there are any useful illustrations in the field of science," and he goes on to misquote me so that the rest has no meaning. (This is, however, just carelessness.) The impression he wishes to give is that at the time I had not much use for and was even hostile to dialectical materialism. Actually, the isolated quotation falsifies my then outlook. I said " it was primarily an interpretative method rather than a method of detailed investigation " . . . . " One could bring forward examples from the detailed work of science to show that these (dialectical) laws may be interpreted there also " . . . . " They must have their principal application in the field of social and economic development," and in saying these things I was going much further than some of its spokesmen in this country at that time, from whom I had tried to gather light. Dutt is, of course, trying to make out how much I have moved since that time; that is true, and I am very conscious of it, but the falsehood lies in the impression that Dutt himself and the whole left-wing were not then also theoretically backward. We have all moved, and to be unconscious of this, as Dutt's quotation and inference implies about himself, is to be undialectical.

Now this extraction of quotations from their context runs as a consistent thread throughout Dutt's review. He quotes what I have called the General Law of Change (misquoting it so that it is meaningless, but that again is simply carelessness), and then adds, " If this is all that is meant by dialectical materialism, then its view of development would

indeed be a crude mechanical one," from which the reader naturally gathers that I have said that this is all that is meant by dialectical materialism. This is a piece of barefaced misrepresentation. *I challenge Clemens Dutt to show anywhere by quotation that I have said or implied this.*

Let us see how he slips into this view. It will be seen to involve a definite weakness in dialectical understanding. Anyone reviewing my book with some appreciation of the subject matter will see that I have followed a well-defined conscious plan. The earlier parts of the book are concerned mainly with mechanical and physical illustrations of dialectical change, showing the specific detailed changes *at that level*. At that stage I extract a general law of change for that level. Dutt quotes it at that stage, where I point out correctly that these illustrate dialectical change, although they are in the main only concerned, so far, with material phenomena. I then pass on to generalise the meaning of the law and its terms, in the fields of biology, in human society, in relation to thinking and feeling, in purposive thinking and action, in the logic of a physical process, in scientific theories and ideologies of classes. In each of these I try to show that the dialectical process is at work in its own specific way. I break away from the mechanical illustrations, be it noted, with the words: "Are we correct in saying that this process takes place also in the transformation of ideas? So far we have sought to establish it for changing processes in materials. That this is so follows at once from the qualitative linkage we have persistently underlined between mental and material changes" (p. 113). Dutt evidently stopped reading prior to this stage, for he blandly writes: "Levy, by his preoccupation with the everyday universe of science in effect loses sight of the relation of subjective thinking to the objective world, and the dialectics of thought as the reflection of the dialectics of the objective world." Perhaps the LABOUR MONTHLY will give Dutt the copy of my last book, *Thinking*, that dealt specifically with its dialectics; a book they did not bother to review, so that I need not now be blamed for not writing it.

I hold from long experience that the proper way to teach is to pass from the concrete to the abstract and back, at successive levels, and, as far as the traditional outlook of this country is concerned, to build up one's generalisations empirically by the multiplication of example on example. That is also the proper way to do active political work. Dutt should criticise this approach in my book, if he objects to it, and if he is indeed conscious of its presence; but he must not split it half-way as he seems to have done, and then remark:

"He exhibits the characteristic empiricism of the naïve materialist natural scientist, the outlook that believes that the greatest degree of understanding of nature is obtained by keeping as close as possible to tangible objects and concrete facts and avoiding abstract thought as much as possible."

He tells me that Lenin insists again and again on studying things and processes in their self-movement. It is what I am doing throughout. Watch Dutt doing it. Here then is a book in which a process of argument is developed. So concerned is he with the need for proving me a mechanist that he remains blissfully unaware of the self-movement of that argument, of its structural evolution, and of the inter-connection of its structure with the type of reader for whom it is intended. He is studying Levy, the victim of mechanism but he is unaware of the self-movement of Levy. He remains unconscious of the fact that Levy consciously designed that structure for a purpose, that he realises the need for a dialectics of exposition. Does this not mean that Dutt analyses at the wrong level, ignorant of the self-movement he is so anxious others should direct attention to? That is not dialectical materialism in practice, but the characteristic form of mechanism. He will find it explained in my article on the "Fallacy of Mechanism" in the first issue of the *Modern Quarterly*.

It is not only in the general plan of the book that this point eludes him. He misses it in the detailed discussion. Thus he says: "Pre-occupied with his discrete objects, concentrating almost exclusively on movement in the form of mechanical movement, defining change as '*in the first instance* a movement of some other thing or group of things' he cannot help presenting a mechanist view of dialectics." Dutt is like a greyhound after his mechanical rabbit: he has no time to be warned by the first four words of the quotation, otherwise he might have read the next sentence: "With that movement *certain aspects* of that thing and its relations to other things also alter" and I go on to talk of changing qualities, and in particular, later on with changing ideas. When discussing movement it is absolutely necessary to pass from the concrete to the abstract. Movement in ideas, and the thought that there may be an underlying regularity in their mode of change, is an extraordinarily difficult point for many people to grasp.

Dutt is at his best in relation to Causality and its meaning for change. He doesn't like my metaphysical titles What Causes Change? and What Causes Change in Society? Don't I know that change is inexplicable, uncaused, like matter? He goes on:

"Like the 18th Century materialists Levy wants a cause of motion." This is indeed a travesty of my position, and illustrates to a fine degree Dutts inability to see Causality and Determinism from the dialectical standpoint. Must I repeat my book? On p. 32 I am warning the reader to remember that change being *given* in Nature, he must beware of trying to explain its origin in an absolute way, otherwise he will find himself asking "How did the world come into existence?" or "From what state of nothingness did the world of somethingness spring?" instead of "From what previous state of change did the present state of change emerge?" Having led the reader to see that there are dialectical regularities at work in all process change, we can begin to

discuss their nature in circumstances in which human beings, conscious of these processes, carry through the dialectical changes. This raises the problem of causality and of determinism to a level beyond that of mechanical causality and determinism, so that human groups, social classes, become causal agents making the dialectical process in social development, making their own predictions come true—a new level of determinism. Dutt's sole comment after asserting that I want a cause of motion is that my answer is not very clear but is apparently a justification for causality and deals with the nature of scientific laws! Could ineffectiveness go further? He does not see that the question "What Causes Change?" has been asked at a new level of understanding.

But that does not prevent his warning me from saying just those things I have warned people from saying. It is like hearing your own jokes recounted to you. One of the worst instances of this however is worth recording:

"His mechanist view goes so far as to proclaim in words that social changes must conform to physical changes 'Just as a liquid when subjected to heating. . . so a community when subjected to growing technical pressure. . . . These are two manifestations of the same phenomena.'"

When I read this I found it difficult to restrain my temper. I had shown with countless examples the universality of dialectical change, but I had stressed, again and again, the particular type of such changes that arise within conscious human groups, and the difference it makes to be individually conscious and to be class or group conscious. Here in the quotation I am referring incidentally to the dialectical change only. Dutt seizes on it for his purpose. After reading that book does Dutt really believe that I imagine that since water boils at 100°C. the working-class will revolt at 100°C. If not what the devil is it that he says I mean? He must explain the meaning of his charges.

There is one last shot in his locker. There is very little difference apparently between my view and Bukharin's! It is a pity he does not explain exactly what difference there is, so that we might see where they are the same. Dutt never enlightens us on such points. He merely refers to me as holding that Q and q are in opposition, that they are opposing forces, that I require a single causal factor Q and so on. If this is Bukharinism he is welcome to it, but it has nothing to do with me. I challenge Dutt to show me where I have referred to Q and q as *opposing forces*, as if they were isolated, independent and self-contained. I have illustrated the dialectical change in all the possible fields of human thought, action, and feeling, of which I could think, and at all possible levels, and never have I taken that view. It conflicts with the whole outlook of the book. I disagree with it. It is stupid. As for Q being a *single* causal factor, where have I said that? I have discussed hierarchy of causes, and groups of causes at a particular level. Every feature taken as a Q is a statistical isolate, a complex of factors. That I have stated

repeatedly. If Dutt wishes to have some idea of the complexity of the factors that are involved in the "single cause" Q let him study the section on the search for the social variables regarded merely as a means for scouting out the field. His objection to having a "single" factor arises from his inability to appreciate what I mean by a statistical isolate, his inability to see that the very fact of the isolate, already in its terminology, unifies the particular and the general, and so effects an immediate economy in dialectical thinking; that what he calls my "apparatus of atomic and statistical isolates" contains the essence of qualitative change, and that he imagines it is mechanistic simply because he is himself unable to emancipate himself from thinking always in terms of things. I personally do not have that difficulty.

I should like to have dealt with his remarks about qualities, but time and space prevent. It is the part on which I should certainly have welcomed help, as it is a subject on which such marxist writing as I know, seem particularly vague. On this issue Dutt, in criticising my view, commits himself to the positive statement that "in dialectical materialism the quality of a thing (why this preoccupation with things, Dutt ?) is not just a relation but that its essential quality is given by the particular kind of movement fundamental to it." Whatever meaning I can attach to this seems identical with my own where I regard a quality as a relation that manifests itself in behaviour, where the relation and the behaviour may be in the realm of things, ideas, or feelings, as my illustrations indicate. If my view is mechanistic I should be glad to see where, but Dutt has not made it plain to me. That I have slipped into mechanistic fallacies I hope I will be the first to admit, for I realise only too well how sterile such a view may be. We who are struggling out of a period of mechanistic interpretation are certain to drag with us many fallacies from the past. That it appears in my approach to qualities or to my development of atomic and statistical isolates I cannot see. I regard these sections as methodologically the most important in the book. In practice I have found them most fertile and so do others who are actually applying them in their political work. Finally I am sorry I am too busy to follow Engels' demand, made at a different period of working class history, that one ought to work over the whole history of philosophical thinking. I am incapable of doing that. Perhaps Clemens Dutt will do it.

## CORRESPONDENCE

# Science & Society

*To the Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY*

THE EDITORS OF *Science and Society* were pleased to find a mention of our magazine in the February issue of THE LABOUR MONTHLY. But our pleasure was tempered when we found that, although your review purported to deal with both the *Modern Quarterly* and *Science and Society*, only a brief paragraph was devoted to our magazine. Moreover this comment was a negative criticism of only a few pages in one article of one issue, and entirely ignored all other articles in the other four issues we had already published. For this reason, your note seemed to us to convey a false impression of the content and editorial policy of *Science and Society*.

*Science and Society*, as you know, is the first scholarly Marxist magazine to get under way in America. Although we began with meagre scholarly and financial support, and faced the traditional hostility and indifference toward Marxist studies, we have been able in a little more than a year to enlist the aid, not only of scholars already recognised as Marxists, but also to help many writers to this position. Young Marxist scholars whose research and publications have been impeded by the conservative editorial policies of the journals of their academic societies, have likewise found in *Science and Society* a long sought vehicle of publication. You will find that our contributions cover a wide range of subjects: economics, law, history, biology, philosophy, anthropology, linguistics and aesthetics; and they include specialised articles such as "American Slave Revolts" and "The Struggle for Land during the Reconstruction Period." *Science and Society* has also been able to publish original Marxian documents such as the previously unpublished letters of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to Americans.

It is our confident belief that *Science and Society* is stimulating Marxist scholarship to a degree unprecedented in the United States, especially in academic circles. That it has contributed to the growing strength of Marxism in this country is indicated by the comment of V. J. Jerome in the *Communist* of January, 1938:

On the basis of its efforts and of its realisations to date, *Science and Society* is deserving of the fullest support of the Communist Party and of all progressives.

We believe that English readers will profit by an acquaintance with the developments of Marxism to be found in *Science and Society* and trust that they will not be deterred therefrom by the scant treatment of your review.

30 East 20th Street,  
New York City, N.Y.,  
United States of America.

EDITORS,  
*Science and Society*.

[We are very glad to publish the above letter, and must express our apologies for the scanty treatment accorded to "Science and Society." Considerations of space, and the necessity of dealing more fully and critically with the "Modern Quarterly," cut down the original plan of dealing comparatively with both journals. We should wish to express our appreciation of the very valuable work being conducted by "Science and Society."—Editor, LABOUR MONTHLY.]

## BOOK REVIEWS

# A Strange Case

*The Strange Case of Major Vernon.* (National Council for Civil Liberties, 12s. 6d.)

IN THEORY, CIVIL servants are free to belong to any political party, Conservative, Liberal, Labour or Communist, and provided they exercise reasonable discretion, to play a considerable part in political work.

At any rate, that is the view of "The Civil Service Compendium," an almost official document which has yet to be challenged. But for all this, certain recent events have tempted all but the most gullible to suspect that life for anyone in the civil service is not such plain sailing.

The dismissal of the dockyard workers in 1936 raised a storm of protest throughout the country but generally the facts remained shrouded in mystery. The whole thing left a nasty taste in the mouths of people who believed in democracy.

Apprehensions raised by the dockyard workers' case were reinforced when the facts in the case of Major Vernon were made known in two courts of law.

Major Vernon held a responsible position in the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough and had always carried out his work satisfactorily. He held radical views. While he was on holiday his house was entered by a gang of ruffians who claimed to be 'waging a more or less private war on Bolshevism.' They removed a quantity of literature, together with other personal belongings such as cutlery and money.

The four ruffians were prosecuted for larceny from a dwelling-house and were bound over for 12 months. Major Vernon, as the result of a police examination of the stolen documents, was prosecuted for technical offences under the Official Secrets Act, in consequence of which, at the age of 54, he was summarily dismissed from a position he had held for twelve years.

It is his case which is examined in this pamphlet. Extracts are given from the proceedings at the Surrey Quarter Sessions, when a principle utterly alien to British law and justice, seemed to be accepted without question by the Chairman and by the counsels for the prosecution and defence; namely, that a man's political views justified another in breaking into his house. This part of the proceedings has to be read to be believed!

It was the Editor of *The Aeroplane* who pointed out that there is hardly a junior draughtsman who is a member of a technical department in the aircraft industry who could not be prosecuted and convicted on a precisely similar charge to that brought against Major Vernon. He comments further, that when the government wants to get rid of anybody, it can always get him on a charge which has nothing to do with the real reasons for his expulsion.

GEOFFREY WILSON.

# America's Example

*Labour's Battle in the U.S.A.* by J. Raymond Walsh. (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.)

THIS ACCOUNT OF the history, aims and leadership of the Committee for Industrial Organisation, written in relation to the past and present of the American Labour movement as a whole, fills a gap in a timely manner. The same problem of bringing the millions in the mass production industries

at present unorganised into the trade union ranks is pressing more and more into our consciousness in this country, so that the story of how the C.I.O. did it is worthy of our study.

The problem of industrial unionism is an old one. In the stormy history of American Labour there have been other attempts to tackle it. They failed. The C.I.O. has succeeded, it has come to stay. It is a living lesson to the British Trades Union Congress.

Even the most conservative delegate at the T.U.C. used to feel advanced when he had to listen (out of courtesy rather than interest) to the remarkable orations of the fraternal delegates of the American Federation of Labour. It seemed as though that institution had really found the way to banish the class struggle for ever from trade unionism. And now we find that out of the side of the A.F. of L. has sprung in a night this challenging monster C.I.O. with mass strikes, new mass technique, sit-downs, stay-ins, political action and heaven knows what, exuding class struggle at every pore. It is as though a respectable spinster chairing a meeting of the Council for the Protection of Public Morals suddenly presented the gathering with a bouncing infant raising its clenched fist and singing the "Red Flag." If this is what Samuel Gompers and William Green have been sitting on all these years, what may we not expect to burst out of our own trade unionism despite all the prim correctness of Transport House?

Mr. Walsh, who is associated with Harvard University, describes dramatically the break between Lewis and Green:

For 90 minutes by the convention hall clock William Green belaboured his point before the United Mine-workers. He, President of the A.F. of L., sat down at last, damp, hoarse, exhausted. He had been president for twelve years and nothing like this—this mutiny, this rebellion—had occurred before. He watched John L. Lewis rise slowly and step forward on the rostrum. Lewis, stormy browed, shaggy, looked out over the miners. How many he asked, had changed their minds about the C.I.O. after having heard Mr. Green's speech? Two men stood up. How many believed he should dissolve the C.I.O.? One delegate got up. Then "let those who believe that the policies of this convention should be carried out, *arise*—" With a shout the Convention came to its feet, stamping, clapping, whistling, yelling, seventeen hundred unanimous delegates. Smiling, John Lewis turned to Green.

But Mr. Walsh reinforces his drama with many facts throwing light on the cause and effects of the conservatism of the A.F. of L. and the reasons for the break, occasionally exploring the history of American Labour to illustrate his point. His description of the C.I.O. drive in Steel and Automobiles is full of life. We see the grandiose plan of the C.I.O., the mass response, the rapid growth of organisation, the skilful winning over of the company unions, the inevitable collisions with the great combines with their feudal-fascist attitude to labour. Perhaps no words can tell the story as vividly as do the figures which show the C.I.O. affiliated membership jumping from 1,000,000 at its formation to 3,718,000 in September of last year. Here are details of the most remarkable individual increases:

|                                     | Approximate Membership                 |                                          | Maximum<br>Potential<br>Membership |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                                     | (1) Before<br>Affiliation<br>to C.I.O. | (2) Sept., 1937,<br>after<br>Affiliation |                                    |
| United Mine Workers . . . .         | 400,000                                | 600,000                                  | 620,000                            |
| Amalgamated Clothing Workers . .    | 100,000                                | 200,000                                  | 200,000                            |
| Int. Ladies' Garment Workers . .    | 160,000                                | 250,000                                  | 300,000                            |
| United Textile Workers . . . .      | 100,000                                | 400,000                                  | 1,250,000                          |
| United Automobile Workers . . . .   | 19,000                                 | 375,000                                  | 500,000                            |
| United Rubber Workers . . . .       | 3,500                                  | 75,000                                   | 120,000                            |
| Iron, Steel and Tin Workers . . . . | 9,200                                  | 500,000                                  | 800,000                            |
| United Electrical & Radio Workers   | 30,000                                 | 130,000                                  | 347,000                            |

The C.I.O. has developed a mass technique with modern publicity methods designed to break down the fear complex arising from decades of victimisation,

it has skilfully utilised much of Roosevelt's new legislation, it combines the appeal to public opinion with direct action. We get a vivid impression of a surge forward of millions, in which the economic and political factors are interacting. It is against this great advance that the companies are turning to fascism, organising their own armed forces and corrupting the public armed forces, spending millions on their anti-labour spying, provocation, wrecking. The hatred of the economic royalists for the President accompanies their organisation of American fascism.

Outlining the problems of economics and politics within the C.I.O., Mr. Walsh contents himself with placing them within the capitalist system. He shows us John Lewis and Franklin Roosevelt linked in a joint effort to save the existence of the present order by modifying its operation to ensure better conditions for labour. Here we should like to ask Mr. Walsh a question. Can we regard as complete and correct an estimate of the C.I.O. and its political twin, the emerging mass political party of American Labour, if that estimate excludes entirely the influence of American Communism? Can we assume that the onward rush of events in the American world can evade the issue of the struggle for power to build a new social order?

The story of the C.I.O. encourages us to ask when something similar will be done here to organise our 14,000,000 non-unionists. America has done it, France has done it, but our General Council continues to sleep complacently. Is it to be from below, as in 1889 and the early nineties' that the resurgence of British trade unionism must come, or will there be a change of attitude by decisive unions within the T.U.C.? America's experience shows that the latter is possible.

JOHN A. MAHON.

#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- No Middle Way.* Jeffrey Marston. (Michael Joseph.) 8s. 6d. 440 pp.  
*La France : Histoire D'un Peuple.* André Ribard. (Editions Sociales Internationales.) 20fr. 360 pp.  
*Life of Lenin.* P. Kerzhentsev. (Collet's Bookshops Ltd.) 5s. 336 pp.  
*Men Without Work.* (Cambridge University Press.) 7s. 6d. 447 pp.  
*History of South Wales Miners' Federation.* Ness Edwards. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 3s. 6d. 160 pp.  
*Geneva and the Drift to War : Lectures delivered at the Geneva Institute of International Relations.* (Allen and Unwin.) 7s. 6d. 234 pp.  
*Government in Fascist Italy.* H. Arthur Steiner. (McGraw-Hill.) 8s. 6d. 158 pp.  
*The Politics of Modern Spain.* Frank A. Manuel. (McGraw-Hill.) 8s. 6d. 194 pp.  
*Mussolini in the Making.* Gaudens Megaro. (Allen and Unwin.) 10s. 6d. 347 pp.  
*Women in the Soviet East.* Fannina Halle. (Secker and Warburg.) 15s. 363 pp.  
*An Outline of Psychology.* Ninth (revised) Edition. H. Lyster Jameson, B.Sc. (N.C.L.C.). 2s. 6d. 177 pp.  
*Marriage Past and Present.* Margaret Cole. (Dent.) 7s. 6d. 306 pp.  
*War and Democracy. Essays on the Causes and Prevention of War.* (Kegan Paul.) 10s. 6d. 355 pp.  
*Pamphlets : The Strange Case of Major Vernon.* (National Council for Civil Liberties.) 3d. 22 pp. *Questions and Answers.* J. R. Campbell. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 6d. 95 pp. *Trotskyism in the Service of Franco.* George Soria. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 6d. 48 pp. *Tenants' Guide.* (Labour Research Department.) 6d. 54 pp. *The City To-day.* A Citizen. (New Fabian Research Bureau.) 1s. 40 pp.

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Published by the Proprietors, the Trinity Trust, 7 John Street, W.C.1. and Printed by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 73 Church Gate, Leicester.